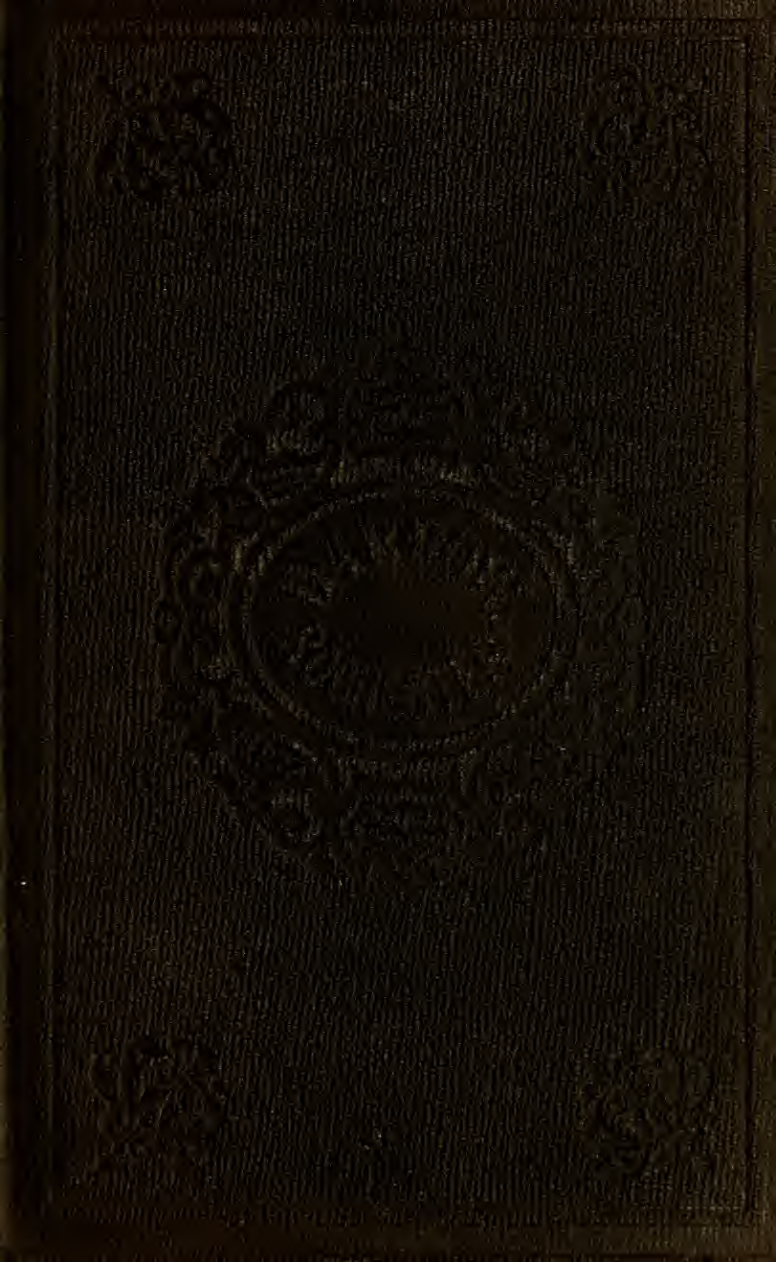

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Filed January 23, 1863

Docketed January 22nd 1863

No. 69

CHURCH DISCIPLINE,

IN TWO PARTS,

FORMATIVE & CORRECTIVE;

IN WHICH IS DEVELOPED

THE TRUE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

"A Christian is the highest style of man."
"He that winneth souls is wise."

"It must needs be that offences come."
"By mercy and truth, iniquity is purged."

BY REV. ELEAZER SAVAGE,
ROCHESTER, N. Y.

SECOND THOUSAND.

SHELDON & COMPANY, NEW YORK.
GOULD & LINCOLN, BOSTON; G. S. BLANCHARD, CINCINNATI;
CHURCH & GOODMAN, CHICAGO.
1863.

BX6340
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1863

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23417

STEAM PRESS OF A. STRONG & CO.

J. LENNOX, STEREOTYPER.

PREFACE.

Two editions of Four Thousand copies of "The Manual of Church Discipline," upon "offences" and their treatment—which now constitutes the Second Part of this work—have been published and sold. A re-publication of that work, is now called for, alike by the wants of the Churches, and the wishes of those best acquainted with its merits.

It has been thought best to enlarge the work, by prefixing a Part upon Formative Church Discipline; a subject truly *first*, both in the order of nature, and importance; and were Formative Church Discipline, closely studied, and well understood in its intrinsic nature and vast importance; and vigorously carried forward in the Churches, we fully believe, that there would be far fewer offences occurring; and so far less Corrective Church Discipline, required. The First Part of this work will be of great value to all classes of Religious Teachers; as clearly showing them the *nature* of the work they have in hand, in forming men to the true Christian Character, by the culture of depraved mind, with inspired truth. And as showing, also, that it is the intelligent, earnest, laborious, prayerful Teacher, alone, that succeeds in his work; and attains unto "the honor that comes from God only." Such success and such honor were reward enough, for doing the highest work of human hands, in the best possible manner.

And, if this little Volume shall shed any such new light upon the subject of Religious Teaching, as shall induce and ensure the greater efficiency of Teachers, through their own thorough personal culture, its very highest end will have been gained.

The Second Part of this work, will be found, we think, by all Church Members, to contain instructions of vital interest to them. For certainly, the *peace* of the Church of Christ, as flowing from her purity; and as opposed to "bitter envying and strife; to wars and fightings," is manifestly a paramount interest. And yet, what spiritual interest beside, is so greatly exposed and so frequently assailed, as the peace of the Christian brotherhood? There are a thousand *forms* of "offence" to disturb it; and twice as many *forms of treating* those offences, which disturb it more.

It is a matter of most serious question, whether the difficulties of the Church do not arise more, by nine-tenths, from the *wrong manner* of treating offences, than from the offences themselves.

And there are two very obvious reasons of this fact. One is, disciplinary measures, as they exist, are more frequently the offspring of *passion*, than principle. Passion fixes its own end; which is to punish, instead of restore. It makes its own law, instead of leading to the inspired one, made and provided for the case. And passion thus legislates, and executes, and works mischief because it has never been subdued to the obedience of Christ, by the application of revealed light to the understanding and heart, by the Holy Spirit. Another reason is, there has been almost *nothing written* on the subject of Church Discipline, to scripturally instruct Church members, as to the *different kinds* of offences, by which they and the cause may be injured; and the *proper methods* of treating them.

It has appeared to the writer, that no interest, so great as the peace of the Church; that no interest, so much exposed as this, both by offences and their improper treatment, has been so much overlooked and left so unprovided for, by the appointed feeders of the sheep and lambs. We have volume upon volume, treating upon well nigh every doctrine and duty of revealed religion besides; but how little have we written upon this subject.

In the Second Part of this work we have attempted the *classification of offences*, and the *specification of the rule* for the treatment of each class. Each class has its distinctive feature and its absolute rule. Such exceptions to the classification as would naturally arise, are noticed, accurately defined, and provided for. Still, defects, and even errors, will doubtless be detected. It were no easy task, perhaps an impracticable one, amidst offences of an endless variety of type, to do more than to deal in a few general principles and rules. And then we have studied simplicity and brevity, in strict imitation of the Master and his inspired servants, on this subject; that the mind might not be greatly burdened with many things; but deeply impressed with a few, which should serve to hold it amidst the greatest provocations and the sharpest trials, to the certain exercise of brotherly love; to the accurate estimate of wrongs; to the careful consideration of evidence; to the due respect for inspired law; and to the truest regard for the honor of God.

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CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

PART FIRST.

FORMATIVE CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

CHAPTER I.

SEC. 1.—DISCIPLINE; MEANING OF THE TERM.

Church Discipline, in the common acceptation of the phrase, is "the *right treatment* of offending members." The term, Discipline, however, has a much larger sense, namely: the *right training* of all members; that is, their formation to the true Christian character by religious education.

The term is from *Disco*, a Latin word, which signifies to *learn*. And the term Disciple, is from the same root, and means a *learner* — a scholar; one under tuition as well as correction. And hence, as the word Disciple, signifies a learner, so the term Discipline, *learning*, *education*. And hence, Church Discipline, in the strict sense, is rather *Formative*, than reformative or corrective.

It is like the Discipline of Schools, where *teaching* the mass of the scholars is the main business, instead of chastising a few disobedient ones. Correction in a school there may be, and usually is; but it is the exception to the general rule. It is but a small part of the Teacher's proper business. If he use a ruler, as in olden times, to punish a boy's hand, it was not made for that; but rather to line his paper, and improve his taste for order.

So, the Discipline of an Army, is rather Formative, than Corrective; where instruction in military tactics, and drilling for effective service, is the great work, instead of arresting and punishing disorderly soldiers.

And so, also, the Discipline *proper* of a Church, consists chiefly in the instruction and training of its members to high Christian attainments and usefulness, rather than in the correction of some few offenders.

Indeed, *actual doings* show this. How many meetings are held for instruction and devotion, in the course of a year; how few for Corrective Discipline, even in the strictest churches.

So, *inspired teachings*. How many and how full are our own instructions upon those general duties, which are designed to form and to advance the membership to the highest order of Christian character; but, how few, comparatively, are the

scriptural directions in relation to offences and their treatment.

General facts, also, bear strongly on the same point. While the many aim to be, and are, reliable members, it is only the few that so fall into neglect and sin, as to require serious, formal Corrective Discipline. And, if we can suppose, or find a case, where a school, or an army, or a Church is so negligent, so disorderly, so demoralized, as to require that corrective discipline become the main business, we have one that is well nigh, or quite, on the verge of ruin.

It is quite true, as the Saviour has said, that "offences must needs come;" and of course, must be corrected; and so there is, unavoidably, such a thing as Corrective, or Reformative Church Discipline.

And we believe another thing is quite equally true, that Christian Churches would find, comparatively, little work to do, in the correction of offences, were Formative Discipline carried forward vigorously and thoroughly by them. The devoted Christian, like the busy boy, finds little time or taste for wrong doing.

As Formative Discipline, then, is the main business of a church; the rule, not the exception; and as Corrective Discipline will be required, and

must be employed, under certain circumstances, we do well to pause and inquire carefully into the intrinsic nature of both.

Sec. 2.—Formative Church Discipline; what? Plan of treating the subject.

Formative Church Discipline is only another name for Religious Education.

True religious education forms to the Christian character.

The Christian Character is made up of Christian principles and Christian practices.

Principles, themselves, simply, consist in ideas, perceived by the understanding, and loved by the heart, which flow out in practice.

And Christian principles consist in ideas, derived from the Scriptures, perceived by the understanding, and loved by the heart, which yield Christian practice.

Now, to understand these definitions of principle, and of Christian principle, and Christian character, and the work of forming men to such principles and character, *fully*:—it may be necessary, in the first place, to acquaint ourselves with Man, who is the subject of the Christian character;—with his *constituents*;—with the *faculties*

of his mind, and their *office-work;*—with his several *moral conditions;* and with the BIBLE, God's appointed instrument for the reconstruction of his moral character.

For, how can Religious Teachers, to whom this subject is addressed with especial force, cultivate soil skillfully and with success, with the constituents of which they are unacquainted? And with an instrument, which they do not understand in its wondrous adaptation to the proposed culture?

Let me, then, address myself to all classes of Religious Teachers; Ministers of the Gospel—Christian Parents—Bible Class Instructors—Sabbath School Teachers—Colporteurs, and, indeed, to all Christians; and invite their closest attention to a few of the closest things, on the points of inquiry, above enumerated.

The true light needed, and the whole light to be desired, upon the Subject of Formative Church Discipline, may be elicited, perhaps, by considering it, under the *Four following Divisions:*

THE FORMATIVE SUBJECT;

THE FORMATIVE INSTRUMENT;

THE FORMATIVE PRODUCT;

FORMATIVE AGENTS AND MEASURES.

CHAPTER II.

THE FORMATIVE SUBJECT.

Sec. 1.—Man; his Natural Constituents; understanding, heart, will, and executive powers.

Man is the true *subject* of Formative Church Discipline; as a few remarks upon the elements of his nature, and the facts of his case, will show.

The four, grand Constituents of man, are his powers of *thought*, *affection*, *volition*, and *execution*.

The powers of thought, affection, and volition belong to the Mind; and are, the Understanding, the Heart, and the Will.

These three faculties of the mind are foundations in it, for three different classes of mental acts; namely, *intellectual*, *emotional*, and *volitional* acts.

The Understanding is the power of *thought*—of investigation; the seat of all intellectual operations. To this faculty belong perception, mem-

ory, reasoning, judgment, conscience, wit, and imagination. Because, all these mental operations bear the common mark of *thinking*—are so many *forms* of thought; and are, therefore, referred to the Understanding whose grand characteristic is thought.

The Heart is the seat of all *emotional* exercises—the power of affection and passion. All the mental *feelings*, whether pleasurable or painful, belong to the heart; as love and hatred, joy and sorrow, hope and fear, benevolence and selfishness, pride and humility, sympathy, gratitude, envy, anger, shame, &c.

The Will is the seat of the *volitions* in relation to action; the power of choosing or refusing a proposed course of action--of determining what one will, or will not, do.

And the Body is the power of *execution.* The body does the bidding of the mind. The body is the servant; the mind, the master. The body is the instrument; the mind, the agent that wields it.

Hence, it will be perceived, while it is the office-work of the Understanding to *think;* and of the Heart to *feel;* and of the Will to *chose* or decide upon practical courses, it is the office-work of the Body to *execute* the plans, and wishes, and purposes of the mind.

And hence, also, may be perceived, the *order* of this mental and corporeal action. The mind acts, legitimately, before the body. And, of the faculties of the mind, the understanding is the leading one; because, we always think of an object, before we desire it and resolve upon its attainment. The emigrant, for example, is seen, first, *thinking* of the new country to which his attention has been called. This is the work of the Understanding. And then, *desiring* to remove to that country. This is the work of the Heart. And next, *determining* to do so—the work of the Will. And last, he is seen, *walking*, *talking*, *packing*, and *using* all needful, practical means and measures to execute the thought, the desire, and the purpose of the mind.

So, the Convert to religion. First, as a sinner, under conviction, he *thought* of the service of God. Then, with his renewed heart, he *desired* to enter upon that service. And next, with subdued will, he *resolved* to do so. And his full consecration to the activities of religious life, followed as the philosophical result of the aforesaid inner life and action.

Such, then, is Man. Such, his constituents—such, the faculties of his mind and their office-work—such, the laws of mental and bodily action,

and such the things respecting man, which the Christian Teacher should understand. And more, he should understand the *moral condition* of these powers of man, in his three, several states: primal, fallen, and renewed, in order that he may labor, intelligently, in the great work of his *re*formation.

Sec. 2.—Man; His Moral States; primal, fallen, and renewed.

We proceed, therefore, from considering the natural coustituents of man, to notice, briefly, his Moral conditions.

1. Man's *primal state* was one of *entire and perfect obedience* unto the great Law of his being—the First Commandment; which required "Love to the Lord his God, with all his heart, and soul, and mind, and strength."

We have, in this law, it will be perceived, a distinct recognition of the chief powers of man, already enumerated. "Mind," signifying the intellect, the understanding; "Heart," the seat of the desires, the affections; "Strength," physical strength, executive power; and "*Soul*," life; the principle of life; animal life and mental life; life, the basis af all mental and physical action."

And thus, the Law is seen as made *for* man, and adapted *to* man; and as spreadiug its claims over the whole surface of human capability. And, in the primal, Eden state, man's obedience to this Law, was perfect and entire; *entire*, as including all his powers; and *perfect*, as respects the condition of these powers.

2. Man's *present, fallen state* is simply and precisely, the opposite of his primal state; that is, a state of *entire and perfect disobedience.* We now see him a transgressor of the law of his creation, in thought, affection, purpose, and life; wrong in his estimates, disproportionate in his regards, and of practical decisions and life, corresponding with such defective view and feeling. We now see him who was "made but a little lower than the angels," in breadth of intellectual range, and in immensity of desire, "and crowned with glory and honor," fallen lower than the level of the brutes that perish by the misdirection of his intellect and the pravity of his passions. We see him, with all his powers, as fully prostituted to the vile service of sin, as before the fall they were devoted up to the high service of his God.

3. Man's *renewed state*, as contemplated by the Gospel, in its broadest view, is simply, a *reinstate-*

ment, in the entire and perfect obedience of the primal state.

And hence, it is most significantly called a religious state—a state of Religion.

Because it is a state of being re-bound to God, as the term, religion, signifies. The term, from *re* and *ligo*, signifies to *bind again;* and supposes man once bound to his God—then unbound, and now rebound. Adam was bound to God by the strong ties of sentiment, affection, purpose, and obedience. And so was bound in the strongest sense in which one intelligent being can be bound to another. Then came the disruption of all these ties in the fall, and now comes the re-binding—the re-instatement.

This renewed state is very clearly indicated, by the terms of the Great Commission, "*believeth and is baptized.*" "He that believeth and is baptized;" that is, he that *understands*, and *loves*, and *chooses*, and *obeys* the truths of the gospel. The internal exercise of faith, and the outward act of baptism, task and employ the whole man—all his powers of thought, affection, volition and execution. Because, in this case, he perceives the truth with his understanding, and loves it with his heart, and choses the way of truth with his will. All this is the internal obedience of the invisible

powers; and baptism comes in as one of the first outward expressions, and legitimate fruits of the internal obedience.

And hence, a child may see, that faith and baptism are the obedience of the *whole man* to God—an entire obedience—the obedience of the understanding, heart, will, and life.

And how clear and beautiful an illustration of this, the case of the Ethiopian Eunuch. First, he is seen *thinking* of the truth embodied in Phillip's exposition of the Prophet; and then, *loving* that truth "with all his heart;" and next, *deciding* to obey it, because his language: "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" is as truly the language of decision as of privilege; and last, he is seen *actually obeying it*,—immediately baptized by Phillip. This now, was an *entire* consecration—the obedience of the *whole* man—of all his powers to the laws of faith and baptism.

And hence, how truthful our first remark upon man, as the Formative Subject, that his four, grand constituents are his powers of thought, affection, volition and execution. We see these powers all put forth in this action of the Eunuch, rendering his obedience entire, if not perfect.

And how plain, that the very essence of Religion, lies in the obedience of all these powers to the truths of the Bible.

How plain, also, that all these powers have an office-work in relation to the Bible; and that that office-work is performed, and only performed, when they are employed in strict obedience to its truths.

And thus we are brought, from considering the office-work of the Mental Faculties in relation to the Bible, to consider the true office-work of the Bible in relation to the mental faculties. For, if the Faculties of man have an office-work in relation to the Bible, then, must the Bible have an office-work in relation to them; for, there must be a mutual adaptation, in strict accordance with the wondrous harmonies of the Universe.

CHAPTER III.

THE FORMATIVE INSTRUMENT.

SEC. 1.—THE BIBLE; ITS OFFICE-WORK, PRESENTATION OF INSPIRED TRUTH TO THE MIND.

1. The BIBLE, "given by inspiration of God, and profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness," is the true Formative Instrument.

But, the close question naturally arises, "What

is the *precise office-work* of the Bible in forming fallen man to the true, Christian character?"

And the answer is as plain, as the question is pertinent: simply, the *presentation of truth*—the presentation of *its* truths to *his* mind.

The Bible, like the Sabbath, was made for man; and, therefore, must present him, with what is adapted, alike, to his natural capacities, and moral wants. And hence, it does present him with three things:—with *statements of truth*, to be investigated; with *objects of affection*, to be loved; and with *rules of action*, to be chosen. And these statements, and objects, and rules are most striking in their adaptation to man in two respects.

First, they meet the *Natural demand* of mind. God made the Understanding to investigate truth, and the Bible to furnish that truth. He made the Heart to love objects of affection, and the Bible to present them. He made the Will to choose rules of action in view of motives, and the Bible to furnish both the rules and the motives. And thus is met the natural demand of mind.

And next, they meet the *Moral demand* of mind. These subjects of investigation are provided and presented to the understanding, not simply to employ it; but to employ it rightly—to savingly enlighten it by displacing error with

truth. These objects of affection are here grouped and presented in attractive description, not merely to engage the ever-longing heart; but to secure its love for objects of truest, highest, moral worth, instead of the false ones and the base ones which have stolen upon its regards. And these rules of life are summed up and pressed, not barely to relieve natural inquiry by direction; but to bless with plain direction in the narrow way that takes hold on life.

And thus, the Bible, by its themes, by its objects, and by its practical directions is clearly seen to meet the whole Natural and Moral demand of mind.

2. Again, the wondrous adaptation of the Bible to man, is seen in that it addresses, with marvelous skill, the whole man—all the mental powers, in *just proportion;* and thus secures the proper balance of the mind. For, when the whole Bible is addressed to the whole man, it ever produces a well-balanced, religious mind and character,—ever yields a life of enduring excellence, because, a life based, equally, on the convictions of the understanding, on the interest of the heart, and on the decision of the will.

And thus, fallen men are set right in their sentiments, in their affections, in their purposes,

and in their lives, by the Bible as the revealed standard of moral and Christian character.

3. Again, it should be remarked, that, the office-work of the Bible is presentation, *simply*. It can only present to the understanding, heart, and will their appropriate objects, in order to induce right action. It has no power to produce that action. This is the province of the Divine Spirit. "The inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding." It is the Word that teacheth. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth."

But, though simple presentation of the truth to the mind, is all the Bible can do, yet this is an indispensable service. For, without such presentation, no man could ever become a believer and be saved.

Sec. 2.—Forms of presenting truth to the mind. Reading. Teaching.

It is written, "Faith cometh by the word of God;" that is, by presenting its truths to the mind, as through *the eye, in reading*. Again, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Here, we have the same idea of presentation, only it is by *preaching*, or *teaching;* when the truth is presented to the mind, through

the *eye* and *ear*, *both;* and thus to the greater advantage.

And the necessity of this latter form of presenting truth to the mind, is clearly shown by the Apostle's appeal to the Romans, "How shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent?"

Thus clearly showing, that the plan of salvation involves the *sending*, and the *preaching*, and the *hearing*, and the *believing* in order to the salvation. And the salvation is thus seen as traceable directly back to the believing, and the believing to the hearing, and the hearing to the preaching, and the preaching to the sending, and the sending to HIM who said: "Go ye and teach all nations."

Such is the logical order of these things. And such the logical necessity, which originated a Teaching Ministry, and a Teaching Membership. The Gospel must be taught in order to its best,—its most effective presentation to men.

We are thus brought, from considering the office-work of the Mental Faculties in relation to the Bible, and that of the Bible in relation to those faculties, to consider the true office-work of *Preaching* or *Teaching* in relation to both. For all true religious teaching has to do, both with the

Truth of God, and the Mind of man. These are the flint and the steel that must be brought into skillful contact, in order to the spark of conviction, and the flame of spiritual life.

But, before entering upon the examination of the precise work of Religious Teachers as Formative Agents, it will favor a more distinct view of that work, to allow a chapter to intervene on the FORMATIVE PRODUCT. Because, the end and fruit of a service, must always determine the character of that service. The work must be adapted to the proposed product; as the work is for the product, and not the product for the work.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FORMATIVE PRODUCT.

SEC. 1.—THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER; A PRODUCT, MADE UP OF PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES.

The legitimate fruit of Formative Church Discipline, or true Religious Education, is the *Christian Character*. The Christian character is a *product*. It is not an outgrowth of Nature, but a creation of Art. Not something innate; rather,

something ingrain; a thing wrought *in* man, and *for* man, and *by* man; a pure product of various and combined agency and instrumentality.

The Christian character is a formation; made up of Christian principles and Christian practices. Principles are internal, and belong to the mind; practices, external, and belong to the life. Principles are the basis of practice; and practice, the fruit of principle. Principle and practice, together, constitute character.

Sec. 2.—Principles; what essential to them? idea, perception, affection, practice.

Principles, simply, we have said, consist in ideas, perceived by the understanding, and loved by the heart, which yield the certain fruit of practice.

Four things, then, are essential to principle: the *idea*, the idea *perceived*, the idea *loved*, the idea *practiced*.

First, the *idea* is essential to principle. The idea is the element of principle. As there could be no character without practice, nor practice without principle; so no principle without the idea. An infant has no character; because, no practice, principle, nor idea. So an idiot. The idea is the seed of principle, as principle is the

germ of character; which lies dead and fruitless, until the granary of elements, being unlocked, it is brought out and sown in the mind. To sow a thought is to begin a principle, and commence a character.

Again, it is essential to principle, that the idea be *perceived by the understanding*.

Here, is actual contact—the indispensable contact of the idea with the mind, and of the mind with the idea. As the sown seed is brought in contact with the soil; so the presented idea with the understanding. An idea, out of the mind, is like seed out of the soil. A Bible of thoughts, unused, is like a granary of seed, unsown.

The idea, then, must be conveyed to the understanding, as a first step in forming principle and character.

Again, it is essential to principle, that the idea be *loved by the heart*, in order to ensure the certain fruit of practice.

The *practice*, the outward development, is the consummation—the completion of principle and character. This "full corn in the ear," is the harvest that must be reaped. It is not enough that the soil be rich, and the seed pure, "the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit."

But such result he never reaches, except the

pure, sown seed fall below the surface, into the warm, moist bosom of the soil—into the region of germination. So, thought must find lodgment, not only in the convictions of the understanding, but in the deeper affections of the heart, in order to ensure action. Affection is the connecting link between thought and action. A mere thought in the understanding, is not principle, guaranteeing action. It lacks the vitality of principle. The vitality of principle is feeling. The heart is the spring of action in a moral agent. Men act, not as they think; but as they feel. Sinners have religious thought; but not feeling, and therefore, not action. The moment men feel attachment to their ideas, they yield to their control. This is action, flowing from the idea, perceived and loved; that is, from pure principle. And is, therefore, true action, greater than thought, greater than affection, greater than principle; because, the end and the completion of them all. But such end and consummation is never reached without the intervening affection. The idea must be loved by the heart.

Again, it is *not* essential to principle, that the idea be *good and true.* It may be false and bad as well. It is quite immaterial. Only, the resultant principle and character will correspond with

it. The moral stamp of the character will always be as the moral character of the idea. The purity of the seed, determines the excellence of the harvest. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shal' he also reap."

Sec. 3.—Constituents of Christian Principle; idea, inspired, perceived, loved, practiced. Christian Character. Way formed.

Christian principles are ideas, derived from the scriptures, perceived by the understanding, and loved by the heart, which yield the certain fruit of Christian practice.

Five things, then, are essential to Christian principle: the *idea*, the idea *inspired*, the idea *perceived*, the idea *loved*, the idea *practiced*.

After what has been said upon principle, in the abstract, it will now be sufficient to the fullest view, to say, that the constituents and essentials of pure, perfect, Christian character, are Christian principles, and Christian practices; as they lie in the form of the exact, inspired idea; the clear, certain perception of the idea; the true spiritual love of the idea; and the strict, undeviating practice of the idea.

The *exact, inspired idea*, the seed of the aforesaid heavenly product, we have in the BIBLE;—a wondrous volume, replete with the thoughts of God—a vast garner of the "incorruptible seed" of Christian character—the appointed means of an indestructible, spiritual life; "the Life of God in the soul of man."

The *clear, certain perception* of the inspired idea may be aided greatly by instruction; but depends largely on study and prayer, as these secure strong, combined action—the action of our own mind on the Bible, and of the Divine Mind on ours.

The *true, spiritual love* of the idea, depends upon the clear perception of it, resulting from close, prayerful study; and from the renewal and quickening of the affections by the new birth and indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

And the *strict, undeviating practice* of the idea, depends upon the thoroughness of the conviction of its truth, and upon the intensity of the love of it as true; or upon the strength of the principle. As the steadiness of the visible superstructure, depends upon the solidity of the foundation which lies beneath the surface. Such is true, Christian Character; and the way of its formation.

Sec. 4.—Character of Christ, an illustration of Christian Character.

The Character of our Lord was a pure and perfect one; a character, in every feature and view, of infinite excellence—the very perfection of moral worth and beauty.

Moral worth and beauty, in the highest sense, reside in God; and consist in the combination of His justice, truth, benevolence, wisdom, and faithfulness. These attributes exist in the Father, in infinite and equal perfection; giving the most perfect balance and excellence of character. Together, they constitute "the beauty of holiness," or, the beauty of *wholeness*—completeness of character.

But, all these same attributes,—this same matchless, moral worth and beauty received their earthly manifestation in Christ, who was "the brightness of His Father's glory, the express image of his person." And, through all the years and contacts of his life, in a world of sin, "the brightness" remained unsullied, and "the image" unmarred. Still was He "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners," in the midst of sinners; "Jesus Christ, the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever."

But this high Character of our Lord, like all

character, existed and lay in the simple form of *principle* and *practice*. It lay in the *idea*, in the *perception*, in the *affection*, in the *purpose*, and in the outgrowing *act*. His ideas were perfectly Scriptural, not because He derived them from the Bible; but, because the Bible derived them from Him. The Bible was the simple imprint of His eternal thoughts. His perception of these ideas, and His love of them, always old and never new, in respect to His Divine Nature; and his practical conformity to them, were as real as they were perfect. And thus, whether His character be viewed as eternal, in respect to his Godhead; or formed like His "stature," in relation to His Manhood, it was in sentiment, spirit, and life, in strictest conformity to the eternal standard of Right; which standard we have revealed to us in the Scriptures. And could be seen, everywhere He walked, and every day He lived, in the simple, tangible form of principles expressed, and practices exhibited.

But, to descend to particulars. Had He perfect ideas of holiness, justice, truth, benevolence, and faithfulness, He loved those ideas, perfectly. And thus, He possessed the *principles* of holiness, justice, truth, benevolence, and faithfulness, perfectly. And hence, the perfectness of his life;

all these attributes, in *practice;* because all, in principle.

And so, had He *distinct ideas* of all other attributes, that give weight to character; of every excellence and grace, that gives adornment to character; and of every conceivable trait and appendage, that gives perfect symmetry and noble balance to character;—these—all these, He *loved most ardently*, and as principles they entered, without limitation, into His most exalted, most useful, most innocent, and most lovely life.

Such, then, was the Character of Christ, as it lay in His principles, and as it lived in His practice.

The Christian Character is the same in attribute and essence. It is, simply, Christ's Character stamped upon his followers, to breath anew in *their* principles, and to live afresh in *their* lives.

Sec. 5.—Other Sacred Characters, for further illustration.

To further illustrate the true, Christian Character, as to *what it is*, and *how it is formed*, we add other noble, but less perfect Examples.

We affirm of Moses, Abraham, Job, David, Daniel, Paul, Peter, John, and other scripture men, that they were *good men;*—men of *high*,

moral, and religious characters. Descending to particulars, we say, that they possessed the principles of justice, truth, benevolence, faith, love, repentance, and the like. And so they did. And if we take another step, farther on and deeper down, we shall see that these principles all lay in their minds in the simple form of *perception and attachment;* and see, too, that they were formed, in the case of each and every man, and in the case of each and every principle, in one and the same simple manner, *namely:*

First, they derived from God, through direct revelation to themselves, or through revelation to others, the *idea of justice.* Their perception of justice—of right doing—of strict conformity to law and moral fitness, in all human intercourses, was clear. Their love of justice, as thus seen, was as strong as their perception of it, was clear. These two, the perception and the attachment, constituted the principle of justice, from which flowed as a stream from its fountain, their practical uprightness.

Again, from the same high source, they received the distinct idea of *truth* in all our utterances; the idea of *benevolence*, a desire wide as the world for the highest welfare of men; the idea of *faithfulness*, the strict performance of every

duty of every relation; the idea of *love* to God, as complacency in moral worth; the idea of *faith*, the cordial accrediting as true, all God has said; the idea of *repentance*, as an approval of the Law as right, and as sorrow for sin, its transgression, as wrong; and so on, to the end of inspired ideas. To each, and to all, of these ideas they were most strongly attached. These two, the perception and the attachment, formed these several principles; from which flowed the reliable statement, the cheerful beneficence, the prompt obedience, the labors of love, the works of faith, and the fruits of repentance.

And thus we see, that all this group of sacred characters, were, not only good men; men of high, moral, and religious character; but, we see the *particular respects*, in which they were such men; and the *simple process* by which they were made such men. They perceived the truth, loved the truth, chose the way of truth, and walked in that way.

Sec. 6.—Two counter Examples; showing that all character, good and bad, is formed by the same natural action of the faculties.

We next add, for further illustration, two counter Examples of character, in the cases of

Ananias, of Jerusalem, and Barnabas, of Cyprus, to show that all character, whether good or bad, is formed by the same, simple, philosophical processes.

Ananias took in the idea of the supreme desirableness of money, and of hoarding it; and cherished that idea until he really possessed "the love of money;" and thus became a *miser in principle.* And this principle, lying right there, in the base thought and covetous feeling, was the bitter "root" from which sprung his evil conduct, in "keeping back part of the price," and in attempting to conceal the concealment by "lying to the Holy Ghost," and the Apostle.

His bitter history may be written in five short sentences. He thought of money. He loved money. He hoarded money. He lied about money. And he died for his lying.

Barnabas' case well illustrates the counter principle and practice of benevolence. Like Ananias, he *thought* of giving money to aid the poor saints at Jerusalem. Unlike Ananias, he was pleased with the thought; as pleased with the thought of giving, as Ananias was, with the idea of withholding. He *loved* the idea of relieving the necessitous, and personally giving for the purpose. And of course, instantly yielded to

the strong principle of benevolence within him. "Having land, he sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the Apostle's feet;" laid it *all* at the Apostle's feet.

And thus, in direct contrast, we have two examples of character; one of benevolence, the other of covetousness: the one, so attractive by its simple, Christian beauty, and the other so repulsive by its glaring, sinful deformity, that we almost lose sight of our point and our lesson, that these two, antagonistic characters were formed by one and the same mental and practical process.

They both began in the *thought;* advanced to the *feeling;* and culminated in the *act.*

Sec. 7.—The Christian Warfare; involving imperfection, as an obstacle in Formative work; illustrated by looking at man in Seven Aspects.

Having thus, distinctly before us, the Christian Character in its essential and attractive constituents; and in the simple manner of its formation, we remark that it is due to the full consideration of such character as a *product;* and to the work of its formation as a *business*, that we turn the leaf to a darker page, and look at things in the

case of all Christian men, *as they are*, and not as they should be.

The high capabilities of man, as the natural subject of the Christian character, show how things should be. Entirely capable, he should be wholly right. Again, the perfect adaptation of the Bible, as the chosen instrument in forming man to the Christian character; its doctrines and duties being simple statements of various truth; addressed to the understanding, heart, will, and life of man; inviting investigation, interest, decision, and action, shows, also, how things should be. Conformity to it, being reasonable, should be exact. And the perfect character of Christ, as our great Example, shows how things should be. The strictest imitation should secure the most perfect resemblance. How things should be, then is plain.

But, if we look straight into the lives of all living, Christian men, we shall see things, not as they should be, but, *as they are*. We shall see *imperfectness* in the best; in the mass, much of *inconstancy;* often, *total neglect;* and sometimes, even *gross wickedness:* defects, always inflicting serious damage, and sometimes entailing lasting dishonor. And if we approach nearer, and look narrowly below the surface, into the mind, we

shall see admixtures of truth and error in the same understanding; pious emotions and sinful feeling in the same heart; and holy resolves and rebellious determinations in the same will;—all this view clearly showing, as a matter of fact, that things are far from being as they should be, with Christian men. Here, then, are *obstacles* in our Formative work, that must be well understood, to be successfully met.

And the case demands explanation, and the explanation is this.

Depravity is a broad, deep, perfect foundation, for all sinful thought, feeling, purpose, and action. *Sanctification* is as broad, and deep, and perfect a foundation for all holy thought, feeling, purpose, and action;—the full counterpart and cure of depravity. *Regeneration*, the beginning of sanctification, only partially breaks up the old foundation of sin; and only partially lays the new foundation of holiness; thus leaving and laying a basis, for all the strange phenomena of good and evil, seen less or more, in every living, Christian man;—phenomena, which equally excite his own, and his neighbor's surprise and indignation;—and a basis, which establishes a life-long and most relentless WARFARE within him, between antagonistic elements and opposing forces.

The fairest and fullest view of the real case, may be best secured, by looking at MAN, in *seven Scriptural aspects.*

1. We see Man, *in Eden*, in his *pure, native state.*

In his constituent character, he is seen as a free, moral agent; a proper subject of moral government; capable of four forms of action, thought, affection, decision, and execution. In his practical, moral character, he is seen as strictly obedient to Law; as in sweetest, fullest harmony with God;—and, at last, as freely plucking the interdicted fruit, and thus, becoming a sinner.

2. We next, see Man, *out of Eden*, in his *sinful, unnatural state.*

The same man; the same free, moral agent; acting in the same natural manner; but acting invariably contrary to Law; having fallen entirely out of harmony with God; and become, consequently, wholly sinful;—wholly bereft of the moral image of his Maker, while still standing erect in his full, mental likeness; lofty, in capabilities; lost, in character.

This state of positive, perfect sinfulness, resulting from man's false step out of Eden, is called, "the flesh;" "the old man;" "the carnal mind which is enmity against God; not subject to his Law; neither indeed can be."

3. We next, see Man, as *Christian man*, made so by the *new birth*.

This change is one step, and the first step back towards Eden. It brings man partially again, to the right principles and practices of his first estate. It begins the great work of his full reinstatement, in his old harmony with God. Definitely, it implants a spiritual relish in the heart, which acts in the form of love to God, and his people, and his law, and his service.

This implantation is called "the new man;" "the inward man;" "the inner-man;" "the pure mind;" "the divine nature;" "the seed," that remains in him that is born of God; and "the spirit," as a product, in contrast with that which is born of "the flesh." These are the Scriptural names, for this new foundation which Regeneration lays, for all holy thoughts, affections, purposes and acts.

And one thought more completes the view. While this change produces "the new man," it does not remove "the old man." It disturbs him—it crowds him; but does not crowd him out. The birth of the one, is not the death of the other. While it creates "the pure mind," the new spiritual relish, it does not destroy "the carnal mind," the old sinful relish. The change takes nothing out of the mind; but simply puts

something in; precisely like the "woman," with her "leaven" and her "meal." If you look into the tray, you will see there the full material for the batch, and the new "leaven" kneaded into it, that "the whole may be leavened." So, is the new principle of holiness, by the Holy Spirit, wrought into the sinful mass of mental operations and exercises, that the whole, in due time, may be sanctified. "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?"

4. We next see Christian man, in his *constituents* and *warfare.*

From the view taken of man, in his fallen, sinful state; and of man, in his renewed state; it will readily be seen, that in Christian man, there are *two distinct natures;* evil and good. "In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." "Sin dwelleth in me." "I consent unto the law, that it is good.' "That which I do, I allow not;"—and also, there is seen in him, *two diverse tastes and dispositions.* "The enmity of the carnal mind," and "delight in the law of God;"—and also, *two different men;* "the old man, corrupt according to the deceitful lusts," and "the new man, which after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness;"—and also, *two opposite laws.* "I find then a law, that when I would

do good, evil is present with me." "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind;—and also *two antagonistic tendencies.* "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." And hence, also, it will readily be seen, that in Christian man, there are *two separate foundations* of action, *sin* and *holiness;* rendering it quite plain and certain, that wrong and right actions, both, will appear in the lives of Christian men. Because, the practice must be as the principle. Corrupt nature will show itself, in proportion as it exists, for the same reason that water runs down hill. And so, of the divine nature. The old salt tide of the sea of sin will roll up strong waves against the fresh, deep current of the river of holiness. The mystery, then, is solved. We now understand *why* the Galatians sometimes "*run well;*" and then as well, *why* they were "*hindered.*" How easily we now account, for the conduct of Aaron, in making the golden calf; of Moses, in rebelling against the commandment of the Lord at the waters of Meribah; of David, in the matter of Bathsheba and Uriah; of Peter, in several instances of wrong doing; of the Corinthians, in numerous cases of

marked impropriety; and of five of the seven Churches, in Asia, which were so very erring, as most justly to be blamed. We now see, perfectly well, *how it is*, that "A just man falls seven times, and rises up again,"—slides back frequently, but always recovers his foothold. It is simply because it is *in him* to do both; in him to fall, and in him to rise; in him, to slide and to recover.

Remember, we are not framing an apology, to cover sin; but simply explaining a case, the better to meet sin and correct it.

5. We next see Christian man, in the *hindrances* and *helps* of his warfare.

First, his *hindrances*. We must keep steadily in mind, that the Christian is fighting for holiness of character, which involves victory over sin. His hindrances in this conflict, are the "world," the "flesh," and the "devil." The flesh, or "old man," is within him; and the world and the devil, without him. And the world and the devil, without him, act on the flesh within, and draw him into neglect and sin. And, it is so, because all the three, the world and the flesh, and the devil are the same in *moral character;* are all alike, bad in character; all alike, friendly to sin, and inimical to holiness.

By the "world," we should explain, is meant,

the various *objects* around us, which engage our attention and pursuits; as persons, property, business, honor, pleasure. These all may be morally good or bad, in their character and influence upon the Christian; and so, as they engage his thoughts, desires and pursuits, may be either a blessing, or a curse to him.

The term, *world*, in the Bible, however, is generally used in a bad sense; that is, as unfriendly to grace in its influence. The influence of its "cares," its "friendships," its "love," its "riches," its "wisdom," its "evil," and its "pollutions," is particularly noticed. And this influence may be hurtful to the Christian, in two ways. Its bad things will attract, and please, and win his bad heart; and then, even its good things often draw him into excessive care and pursuit of them. As to "the old man," he is a man up to any excess, and any sin! He knows nothing of self-denial, nor moderation, even; but certain as the dog to his vomit, and the sow to her mire, he plunges right into his "adultery," his "thefts," his "covetousness," his "drunkenness," as into his element; and the deeper the sea of pollution, the better; the more to his liking!

This, then, is "the old man," "the flesh," in the immoderate use of the world; and this is

"the world," in its influence on the old man; and combined, they constitute a mighty hindrance to the Christian in his heavenly course.

Next, consider the *character and influence of the devil*, as he harmonizes in character and influence with the world, as another source of hindrance.

The devil, like the Holy Spirit and the human soul, is an invisible, intelligent, and powerful spirit; capable of thought, desires, purposes, acts and influence. Spirits influence spirits by *presenting objects of thought and interest* to each other. So, human minds. So, the Holy Spirit, "the Comforter, teaches all things, and brings all things to remembrance, and guides into all truth." And so, "the subtle serpent," presented the "good," the "pleasant," the "desirable fruit" to Eve's imagination. So "Satan filled" the head and "the heart" of Ananias, with the thought and the desire, to "keep back part of the price;" and to nicely smooth over the transaction with a lie. He even drew the attention of the Son of God, Himself, by a display before his mind, "of all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them."

Then, the devil, as a powerful, evil spirit, coming in contact with the mind of man, can exert, and will exert a bad influence, as certainly as the

Holy Spirit, a good one. "Working in the children of disobedience" is ascribed to him as plainly, as "working in" the children of God "to will and to do of His good pleasure," is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. As "the god of this world," he displays its objects so as to "blind" men; and on purpose to blind them, "lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them." So, he blinded Eve, and Ananias, and Demas, and David, and Solomon. So, he tried to blind the pure, the Omniscient Christ. And so he does, so greatly blind multitudes of Christians, that they admire, and enjoy, and praise, and pursue many very bad things; or good things in a very bad way; and are, thus, by the world and the devil, acting on the flesh within them, sadly hindered in the holy war.

In passing, we ask, when will Christians learn these *three things;* that "the old man" will think, and desire, and will, and act, sinfully, if indulged at all; that "the world" will employ him with its bad objects, or excessively with its good ones, if at all allowed to do so; and that the devil, with his great power over depraved mind, will display and paint his worldly objects, and thus attract, and charm and sway, until Christians, even, are "led captive by him at his will."

Second, his *helps.* The Christian man is helped forward in his course, by the *Word* of God and the *Spirit* of God, acting on "the *New Man*"—his new spiritual nature—and drawing him along in the way of duty and life.

All these are of the same moral character, *holy.* They belong to the same Divine family; because, the word is the offspring of the Spirit; and the new man, the offspring of the word and the Spirit, both. The sinner is "born of the Spirit" as the Agent, and of "incorruptible seed, the word of God," as the Instrument, in the transformation of the new birth.

Here, then, is such intimacy of relationship, and such identity of nature, between the *spiritual Three*, as must render it certain, that every contact of the word, and every visit of the Spirit, will feed and strengthen and encourage and delight the New Man. "They that are after the Spirit, do mind the things of the Spirit." "I delight in the law of God, after the inward man." "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" Definitely, the office-work of the Word, in its own phrase, is to "enlighten," "reprove," "quicken," "sanctify," "guide" and "keep." And thus, all may see how powerful an *help* "the sword of the Spirit" must

be to the Christian man, in waging and pushing the war of his life against the world and the flesh and the devil, when steadily, vigorously wielded.

And then, when the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of truth—the Spirit that moved holy men to write the truth—the Spirit, that quickens the embryo thought of truth into the new man, in regeneration—the Spirit that guides into all truth;—when this Spirit visits the Christian man, and does His appropriate office-work, in vitalizing and applying the truth, in convincing the understanding, in quickening the heart, in girding the will, and in covering the head in the day of battle; O! this is *help* indeed!—the Sovreign, Almighty help, of the Holy Spirit; superadded to that of the Word, "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword!"

Infinite odds against the enemy! Such a Word as the Bible, against such a World as this! A World, whose vain fashion is passing away! A Word, whose imperishable truths are to live in the records of immortality! And such a Being as the Spirit, against such a creature as the devil! An Almighty Spirit, whose holy sway is to be eternal! A finite spirit, whose evil influence is but for a day! "With us, is the Lord our God, to help us, and to fight our battles."

And thus, we have the Christian man's *helps*, as well as hindrances, in the war of his life. And the sum is this. We see, on the one hand, this present evil World and the Devil, harmonizing in moral nature, and genially combining with the Old Man, to draw the Christian into neglect and sin; thus interrupting the work of reconstruction for the time being. And, on the other, we see the Divine Word with its objects, and the Holy Spirit with his influences, harmonizing in moral nature, and combining as genially with the New Man, to aid the Christian in the way of life. And thus, we see *three* against *three;* the world, the flesh, and the devil against the word, the new man, and the Spirit, in sharp and bitter antagonism! The Old Man against the New Man, as the principals of the warfare; the World, against the Word, as the instruments of the strife; and the Devil against the Spirit, as the aids in the conflict.

6. We next, naturally notice Christian man, as to the *specific duties* of his warfare.

Duties are always suggested by relations and circumstances. Standing at this point in our examination of the relations and circumstances of Christian man, we see him in the midst of warfare; and we see the fundamental causes of

the conflict. We see him partially sinful and partially holy. We see him surrounded by mighty hindrances, and attended by powerful helps. These are the stubborn, unconcealable facts of his case. And another thing, we must see, with equal plainness, that if we will perfect him in the Christian character, we must take him just as he is, good and bad; and have him perform those *specific duties*, which are suggested by the *facts* of his mixed character and unique case.

These facts are *five in number*. And if we will recall them in order, we shall readily see the several duties they naturally suggest; and that the Scriptures require in the case.

The *first fact*, with which we have met, is, that as men—as free, moral agents—all our responsible acts, good and bad, take the four forms of *thought*, *desire*, *choice*, and *outward action*. All in this order.

And hence, the natural and scriptural law for the case: "Keep thy heart, with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." That is, watch, with keenest eye, the sources of action. Post your pickets here, where the world creeps in, and the devil lurks for observation and ruinous advantage!

The *second fact*, with which we have met, is,

that we still have within us the *remains of sinful nature*, as a strong tendency to, and foundation for, sinful action.

And hence, the natural and inspired law for the case; "Mortify your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupisence, and covetousness, which is idolatry." That is, Keep down these old-man, thorn roots of sin. Never allow them to send up a sprout; much less, grow a thorn. "Sin shall not have dominion over you." Sin may be in you, as long as you are in the body; but it need not—shall not, be dominant. Master it, instead of its mastering you. Mortify it, and let it mortify you, *never!*

The *third fact*, that has met us, is, that there has been implanted within us, a *divine nature*, as a strong tendency to, and foundation for, all holy action.

And hence, the natural and scriptural laws for the case: "As He which has called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." That is, as God has made you "new creatures," live new lives. Again, "As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." Born to grow, grow. Grow on milk, until you crave meat. Outgrow the tastes and

the weaknesses of spiritual infancy; and never rest until you reach the design of your being, in the noble maturity, strength, and usefulness of Christian manhood!

The *fourth fact*, with which we have met, is, that the various *objects of the world*, and the *influence of the devil*, act directly and powerfully on our remaining sinful nature, and draw us into neglect and sin, and are thus great hindrances in the divine life.

And hence, the natural and inspired laws for the case; "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." "Be not conformed to this world." "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist." That is, Overestimate no worldly object. Moderate and limit all your earthly desires and pursuits to the real worth of things. And watch that roaring Lion, the Devil, as your bitterest foe; as keenly as he watches you, as his choicest prey.

The *fifth fact*, that has met us, is, that the *word of God*, and the *Spirit of God* act directly on our new spiritual nature, and aid us in the sharp warfare of life.

And hence, the natural and scriptural laws for the case: "Take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be enabled to withstand in the evil day; stand, having your loins girt about with truth; and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." "Walk in the Spirit. "And grieve not the Holy Spirit."

That is; Take up the *word* of God. Master and embrace all its truth; and thus build up a character of fundamental strength and vital force. Bind the truth upon your loins as a girdle of might, and wield it as a weapon of defence. Quote it to the devil, as did your Captain. Confront the world and the flesh with the same unanswerable argumentation. And thus please the Holy Spirit, your Almighty Friend and Helper "in the evil day."

7. We next and last, see Christian man as *reaping and enjoying the blessed Results* of true faithfulness to the laws of his life-warfare.

For, there must be reaping as well as sowing; and the more certainly in the moral world. As these laws are understood and obeyed, good results must inevitably follow. Facts no more certainly suggest duties, than duties promise such results. "A faithful man shall abound with blessings."

The legitimate *results* of true faithfulness, to the laws of Christian life and warfare, may be thus briefly stated.

1. True faithfulness will weaken and destroy "the Old Man," the tendency to sin; and strengthen and perfect the "New Man," the tendency to holiness.

Precisely, as in the "long war between the house of Saul and the house of David; David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul weaker and weaker."

2. True faithfulness will weaken and destroy the power of the world and the devil over Christian man; and strengthen and increase that of the word and the Spirit upon him. The superior, moral cause and forces must prevail. Heaven has decreed it.

3. A true spirit of faithfulness will bring Christian man up to *entire consecration*, and entire consecration will bring him on to *ultimate perfection.*

The true, entire consecration, which eyes and reaches perfection, as the grand result, is *two-fold;* a consecration, on the one hand, to *war faithfully* against the world and the devil and all sin, within and without, to the end of mortal life;—and a consecration, on the other hand, to *obey fully the Word and the Spirit*,—to watch and

pray, and run and wrestle for entire holiness, unto its full attainment, as the great business of the present life, and the great end of the Christian calling.

Warring against sin is not the great business of Christian life; but the culture of holiness, is. Warring against sin is the *incidental*, not the main work.

The Gardener's work and devotion to it, well illustrate those of the Christian. The Gardener knows, that there lies within the bosom of the rich soil he cultivates, the seeds of noxious weeds, and also, the seeds of choice plants. He, therefore, keenly watches all the developments around him; plucking up everything foul, and rearing up everything valuable. But observe, his main business is not to kill weeds, but to rear plants. He only thinks of weeds to destroy them. His chief thought is upon the tender "blade," the swelling "ear, the full corn in the ear," and the bread, the staff of life.

So, the thorough Christian is consecrated *chiefly* to the culture of the plants of piety, "the fruits of the Spirit," in the garden of the soul. And thus fully devoted, has comparatively, little trouble with the weeds of sin. When the fruits of the Spirit are abundant and thrifty, like the corn

covering the whole face of the field, "the works of the flesh" are scarce and feeble, like the weeds, when thus overborne and smothered.

Sin is not to be overcome so much by direct resistance, as by holy living; as the Jews, their enemies, by building, not fighting. It is easier for the Christian, to *walk habitually* with God, than to be fitful and inconstant in the attempt; as thorough farming makes easy farming.

Now, it is *this thoroughness,—this habitual devotedness* to all known duty, and to learn and do all unknown duty, that constitutes entire consecration. But this is not perfection. Entire consecration is, simply, the *devotion of all our powers*, to all duty unto God. Perfection respects the *holy state* of those powers; and involves freedom from all sin. There may be *entireness* of devotion, where there is not *perfectness* of state. Consecration is the direct means of, and road to, perfection. Never consecrated, never perfect.

The Christian, then, who understands his natural and moral constituents, his dangers, advantages, and duties; and who desires and determines to do his duty fully; and who does do it; living thus by the moment, may be said to be *entirely consecrated* to God; and to have attained, and to be maintaining the true, higher, Christian

life; a life, that takes hold on the highest life; a full consecration on earth, that grows right up into the full perfection of Heaven.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, that *when He shall appear we shall be like Him.*"

Perfect, *then*, not now. Because, true, full, heavenly perfection is the *final product* of "the sanctification of the Spirit;" secured by all the processes of entire consecration; and involves the destruction of all the sinful forces within the Christian—the removal of all the evil tendencies—all antagonistic elements—all the weeds of sin, not only; but all the *roots* and *seeds* of the weeds of sin from the soil of the soul. So, that, all his powers shall be in a state of as perfect purity, as Eden ever witnessed; and every thought, emotion, volition, and act shall again be in fullest, sweetest harmony with God. Such is PERFECTION.

And such is the perfection contemplated by *Eternal Purpose.* "For whom he did foreknow, he did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that He might be the first born among many brethren." *Final, full conformity* to Christ's image is the highest perfection. And

such the perfection, also, embraced in the *Eternal Plan.* "Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them he also called, and whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also *glorified.*" "GLORIFIED!—made *glorious*—made, at last, all glowing in the perfect moral beauty of Christ and Heaven!—made a "glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing!" The Purpose and the Plan make perfection, a *consummation;* the highest extreme, as the new birth is the lowest; allotting the intervening space to progress in the work of reconstruction—to the life-growth of Christian character—to be filled up with the conflicts and the labors of entire consecration, in order to full perfection.

And this view, making growth and progress towards perfection, a *distinctive feature* of the work of grace, is confirmed by a flood of Scripture *imagery;* as the gradual growth of the "blade to the ear, and the full corn in the ear;" as the secret process of fermentation by which "leaven" infuses its nature through the mass "till the whole is leavened;" as the growth of the frail infant "unto the stature of a perfect man;" as the gradual strengthening of the powers of digestion, by which a "babe using milk," becomes a man "of full age," craving "strong meat;" and

as the rising light of the morning, which by gradations scarcely perceptible, increases "more and more" unto noontide strength and splendor; pouring over all lands the full beams of "perfect day."

These simple, beautiful pictures of growth and progress, in the midst of numerous and natural obstacles and facilities, well illustrate *the growth in grace;* with which accord a thousand plain passages which represent God, as "performing the work he has begun in his people until the day of Jesus Christ;" and "the inward man as renewed day by day;" and the righteous as holding on his way, and growing stronger and stronger;" as "hungering and thirsting after righteousness that he may be filled;"—as "looking for the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ;" and as saying, "as for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied *when I awake with thy likeness.*"

Perfection of Christian character, then, is most clearly, the GRAND RESULT; as it lies out upon the face of purpose and plan, glowing picture and simple declaration, observation and experience; a thing of Heaven, not Earth; not a thing to be even spoken of, as an absolute, present attainment; but, a thing, ever to be seized, and held, and enjoyed, as a certain, ultimate, glorious RESULT; to be lived for, fought for, and died for.

Sec. 8.—Christian Inconstancy, another obstacle in Formative work; its educational cause.

Besides remaining sin, as one thing in the Christian's case, that is not as it should be; and as a most serious obstacle in Formative work, there is another, which we must consider; namely, *Inconstancy* and its *educational cause.*

There are a thousand subjects of curious inquiry and speculation. None more so, to a man of the world, than the Christian. And nothing in him, awakens so great surprise and elicits so sharp criticism, as his *positive inconstancy;* his being *so much* "*given to change.*"

Perfection of life, is the religious standard which the man of the world carries in his own mind. He knows nothing of the internal, civil warfare of the Christian. He is "not in trouble and plagued, like other men." He honestly thinks if he were to embrace religion, that he would "stick to it," and adorn it. He, therefore, holds the Christian professor to this same consistency; and is perplexed, and indignant, and unbelieving, just because the Christian professor does not hold himself to it. And we may add, fellow Christians, and the inconstant themselves, painfully share in this same trial.

But, there is a *cause* for this strange, inconsistent inconstancy, besides remaining sin; and that cause is, *the want of fixed religious habits.* And this deficiency is attributable to the want of *thoroughness in religious education.* There may be a great deal of bad building on the good foundation which regeneration lays; but, certainly, there is much very defective building. In the present state and style of Religious Education, we largely fail to *form to those habits*, which firmly and steadily hold to the right, and the consistent, and the beautiful, and the attractive, of true Christian character.

Take the field view of the case. Regeneration lays the foundation in part, for perfect Christian character. Such character lies in the principles and the practices. These exist in the forms of thought, affection, purpose, and act. A perfect character involves perfect conformity to the inspired standard in all these respects. Such character, as we have seen, is a result, reached by natural processes, and slow degrees, and usually, amidst many sad interruptions.

The true and desirable thing would be, a regular, uniform growth from the germination of seed to "the full corn in the ear;" steadily increasing in knowledge, and interest, and decision, and

activity unto the complete riddance of sin, and the full attainment of holiness. But, as in all the world's cases of growth, beside; so there is here, the *feeble beginning*, and the exposure to *frequent interruptions* of growth and progress.

What the case, then, demands is, that these precious feeble beginnings be carried forward to completion in *confirmed habit*, by the steadiest growth, possible; and with the fewest interruptions, possible. And this is the *precise work* of thorough culture. The educational mistake and failure is, that we do *not aim at forming to fixed religious habits, as the grand point.* The first, right thoughts, therefore, are not held, and repeated, and increased unto *habitual soundness* in sentiment. The first, right emotions are not held, and repeated, and increased unto *habitual interest* in religion. The first, right purposes are not held, and repeated, and increased unto *habitual decision* in duty. That is, all these rudimental constituents of Christian character, at first, feeble like infant limbs and minds, are not held and repeated, and increased unto *confirmed habits.* We fail in our work, because, we fail in our *point.*

And the sad proof is seen all around us, in the almost uniform want of uniformity, the regular irregularity, the constant inconstancy.

Now, the remedy for the evil, far as it can be secured in the present imperfect formative state, may be found in looking at the *nature of habit*, and the *manner of its formation.*

We may take as our guide, in this inquiry, that striking, Formative direction in the Proverbs of Solomon; "*Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*" It is not enough that the child be instructed, he must be *trained.* To "train" is to *form to a habit.* Habit is a tendency, leaning, drift, to some particular course. The drunkard's habit is to drink to excess, and this tendency is his habit.

Habit respects the *mind;*—the thoughts, and the feelings—the inner as well as the outer, actions.

All habits, or tendencies to particular forms of thought, feeling and action, are acquired by *custom;*—by the frequent repetition of the same thought, feeling, and action;—by being trained, drilled, practiced in them. It is the frequent drinking that forms the drunkard's habit; the oft-repeated oath, the swearer's; the daily drill, the soldier's; the constant obedience, the child's; and the steady devotion, the Christian's habit.

Habits, when once formed, are *strong as iron.* "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, who are accustomed to do evil." A passage, that shows the amazing *strength of practical habit.* The custom of doing evil or good, wrought into confirmed habit, is well nigh impossible of change. And so of *mental habits.*

The custom of thinking of, and desiring, some physical gratification, may be so long indulged, and may become so stereotyped, as to be most painful and trying in its pressure, long after age or infirmity shall have destroyed the physical power to enjoy it. The soul leaps to its old indulgence, while the poor body can take not a step in its accustomed direction.

And so, when habits of skepticism, have been formed in youth, although the false views may become effectually corrected, far as the conviction of their falseness is concerned, they still often return, like unruly animals, to disturb and annoy. And so, the strength of habit, *mental* and *practical*, is often seen, in cases of thorough, early religious training, in fortifying the young against ruinous error and sinful ways. How true, then, that habits are strong as iron. Some writer has said, that "Habits are chains." Chains are

strong to hold. And so are habits. Hence the origin of the word:

"*Habeo*, to have, to hold."

Habit holds the drunkard, the smoker, the swearer, the miser, the soldier, the backslider, the faithful Christian, as with a chain. And so with the trained child. The early bent twig becomes the strongly inclined tree. "Trained in the way he should go, he departs not from it." Habit is the secret of the child's continuance in well doing. If you say, "No, it is *principle* that holds the trained child." We ask, what is principle, in this case, but the *thought* of the right way, and the *love* of that thought, wrought into the child's inmost spirit, by the repeated utterance of his father's lips, and the repeated exercise of his own mind; leading to repeated acts of obedience, until they have become the *fixed habit* of the soul? Thoughts and attachments to them, or principles, are, in the nature of the case, weak at first; and their real, practical value depends upon their becoming *habitual*. Habit is more, and greater than principle. Principle is simply, the perception and the love of a thought. But habit is the confirmation and completion of principle. The practical force of a principle, depends upon the strength of the embracing conviction and

affection; but that strength depends on habit. Principle enables the child to think, and feel, and act, *rightly*. Habit enables him to act so, *strongly* and *continuously;* and, therefore, is the real power, which holds him in "the way" his father taught him.

So was Esther held; Esther, the beautiful and beloved queen of Persia. It is written of her, that she "*did the commandment of Mordecai, like as when she was brought up with him.*" An orphan, and living as daughter with her distinguished relative, she had become so accustomed to his views of her duty; and so reverently respected his requirements, as that when her maturity and culture allowed promotion and acting for herself, she was still as respectful of authority and as carefully obedient, as when in her minority at home. Esther was *perfectly reliable*, because *perfectly trained*. The almost universal unreliability of children, in these degenerate days, is thus seen, both in its intrinsic cause, and obvious remedy. Esther, *trained* as well as taught; *practiced*, as well as instructed, when a Woman and Queen, departed not from the way, her fond and faithful guardian taught her. She was firmly held by sound instruction, ripened into correct principle; and by correct principle, perfected in *habit;* a

habit, as we see strong as iron; and bright as a chain of gold. Beautiful! Beautiful!

And all the "daughters of the Lord Almighty," and all His sons, yet to "be Kings and priests unto Him," would now be arrayed with like beauty of constancy, if as faithfully taught and as thoroughly trained. Allowing as we must, for the great diversity of intellect, and culture, and temperament, and condition, among men; and their favorable or unfavorable bearing upon stability, manly constancy and queenly propriety of Christian life, will always be as the *thoroughness* of religious education. It is the high office-work of such education to bring all the faculties under the full and constant control of inspired truth; thus so deeply planting Christian principles in the mind, and Christian practices in the life, as to stamp on the character, something of the likeness of the Immutable One.

But, such splendid product is not the result of one effort or one day. Permanent Christian character is not formed, when the inspired idea is barely conveyed, and perceived, and loved, and practiced, *for the first*, as in the case of the *convert;* but only when the thought, and the affection, and the purpose, and the act, have been *so oft repeated*, as thus to have become the *fixed*

habit of the soul and the life. No one can properly be said to be educated, in respect to any particular course of thinking, feeling, and action, until so long held to that course, that he will, in a sense, need holding no longer; because, he *holds himself*, or rather, *his habit holds him;* thus making the course natural, easy, and certain. Habit so thoroughly transforms and solidifies, that we become permanently, other men than we were, as to mental, moral, and practical character. Its simple office-work is to *hold to a course of thought and action;* and herein lies its priceless value to the Christian. The thoroughly educated Christian is firmly, easily, sweetly held to the exercises and acts of the spiritual life by the golden chain of religious habit.

This was precisely the case with the three thousand Jerusalem disciples. "They continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." They came right up to Paul's high standard of Christian character; "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

Here, now, is the true, high, *Christian constancy* in question; as taught by precept and as illustrated by example; a constancy, a close eye will perceive, which relates, definitely, to

"steadfast" conviction, "unmovable" interest, and "abounding" activity; the three things, which duly proportioned, give balance and reliability to character. And if we analyze the case we shall see that they were first "pricked in their heart." This was *conviction;* the first step in forming Christian character. They then, "gladly received the word." This was *interest;* resulting from the new birth; the second fact of Christian experience. They next, "were baptized." This was the outer action, resulting from the inner conviction, interest and purpose. And last, "they continued steadfastly in the Apostle's doctrine, fellowship, in breaking of bread and in prayers;" "always abounding in the work of the Lord." This was a vigorous building on the foundation, laid in their previous experience. This was the "*training*," the *drilling*, the *Formative Discipline*, which matured their first principles and acts into *fixed habits;* and conferred on them the high, noble, constancy which they exhibited.

Paul was another example of like noble constancy. It must be admitted, that there was a great *natural basis* for reliability in the power of the Apostle's intellect, in the strength of his heart, and in the energy of his will. His, was an extremely well-balanced mind. Conviction and

emotion went hand in hand; and were so evenly poised, as to hold him to steady action; and were so strong, as to necessitate vigorous action. But the *religious basis* of his constancy, was the amazing depth of his Christian convictions, and the equal strength of his spiritual interest, leading to a purpose that never changed, and a life that never faltered. Paul, like the Jerusalem believers, was no superficial, but a thorough, spiritual formation; taught and trained; rooted as a tree, and grounded as a building, in all truth and in all duty. In him, and in them, we see deep conviction; and deep interest, based on that conviction; and strong, steady action based on both; and all clenched and riveted by HABIT.

And the noble constancy of such like Christian men, arising as it evidently does from fixed habits, as those habits do from thorough, religious education, most clearly shows, that *multitudes of inconstant professors of religion, were never trained—were never formed to true religious habits.* They are Christians, it may be, and have some right thoughts, feelings and actions; but they are *not fixed in them*—not rooted and grounded in them. If they think and feel and do right to-day, there is no certainty that they will to-morrow. They seem, no doubt, uncon-

sciously to themselves, to be the perfect sport of circumstances—of counter influences. If there come a religious breeze—a gale from Heaven—they are all carried away with it. And if a counter one, from the world, the flesh, and the devil, they are all carried away with that, too. Such persons can be said to have no proper, religious habits. If they have any well-defined habit, it is one of "*ups and downs*"—"*offs and ons*," in religion. Perfect Reubens! "Unstable as water, they cannot excel." "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." That is, a *no-minded* man. Such Christians have no particular standard of excellence, fixed for themselves; and therefore, reach none. No one will rise without a standard. No one will rise higher than his standard; nor to his standard, without systematic and vigorous exertion. But, such standard and exertion, they have not. They have *feeble thought*, and *changeful feeling*, and *fitful*, *uncertain action*. Most clearly, they have no impelling and sustaining force of fixed principle and habit, guaranteeing constancy. How alarmingly deficient then, they must be! And how plainly they "have need," like the Hebrews, "that one *teach* them the first principles of the oracles of God;" and thus taught, "have need" to be *trained* in the school,

and *drilled* in the camp of Christ, until their principles shall be matured into *habit;* and their characters moulded to a constancy that shall wipe out present reproach; and clothe them with the lasting beauty of lasting worth.

In closing this chapter upon the true, Christian Character, as the Formative Product, we remark, that, notwithstanding all the serious drawbacks upon its reputation in this present, imperfect state, it is, nevertheless, a CHARACTER *of priceless value.* Because, a Character, *built on the Rock of eternal truth;* a superstructure that will stand when God shakes the world down; a superstructure, therefore, that will never fail us, because its foundation is imperishable. It is a Character, moreover, into which enter *the clearest and deepest convictions of truth;* and is, therefore, an intelligent, sound and permanent character. It is a Character, that embraces the exercise of *the purest and noblest affections;* and so, is a sincere, a transparent, an earnest, and a forcible character. It is a Character, that is marked by *the highest, religious decision;* and is, therefore, a uniform and reliable character. It is a Character that adorns and beautifies the life with *innocency and usefulness;* and is, therefore, a character which

ensures the admiration, the esteem, and the confidence of Earth. And finally, it is a Character, which fits for the perfect society of Heaven;—for its high fellowship and everlasting enjoyment.

CHAPTER V.

FORMATIVE AGENTS AND MEASURES.

Sec. 1.—Formative Agents, and Measures; who, the Agents? and what, the Measures?

1. An Agent is an *actor*, and a Measure, the *form* of his action. An agent or actor implies some form of action; and a measure or form of action, implies an agent or actor. Different agents imply different forms of action; and different forms of action, different agents.

So that, the actor and his action, the agent and his measure are inseparable, and necessarily considered together.

2. Formative Agents are all classes of *Religious Teachers;* and Formative Measures, all the *ways or forms* of their teaching. The object of all Formative agencies and measures, is the pro-

duction of the Christian character; and the individual, intrinsic value of such agencies and measures, is determined by their success in gaining this, the prescribed object.

We shall, therefore, as a main, ultimate point, consider Formative agents and measures, together, in the *grounds* of their success, and in the *causes* of their failure.

3. All the different, Formative agents, known to the Scriptures are the Holy Spirit, Man himself, Christian Ministers, Christian parents, and the Christian Church. These, with their measures or forms of action, may be seen in the light of the following statements and quotations.

The Great Formative Agent is the invisible Almighty, HOLY SPIRIT. He, at first, made man; formed him in the mental and moral image of God; and therefore, knows what he lost in the fall; and can restore it. He next, made the Holy Scriptures, through the agency of holy men, who spoke and wrote as they were moved by Him. These pages are his stereotype plates, to reprint the lost image of God, on man. And He, now makes man "a new creature," by forming within him "the new man," in the new birth; and will, at last, sanctify his spirit, and renew his body, and give him an allotment in "the new

heavens and new earth, wherein will dwell righteousness;" thus superintending all the wondrous processes of "THE REGENERATION," from brooding over the chaos of creation, to resting in the grand consummation, in the renewal of all things under the Messiah.

Thus, is the Holy Spirit, the greatest Formative Agent in the Universe; the high indispensable Source of help in the work of reconstruction, to all agents and all subjects.

4. Man, himself, is a Formative agent, with reference to *his own case.* In an high sense, he is the former of his own character; the architect of his own moral and eternal fortune. By taking the Bible in hand; and putting himself under the tuition of the Holy Spirit, in a spirit of submissive, teachable co-operation, he becomes the subject of a change in views, feelings and purposes, wondrous as delightful; a change, which is, alike, the forerunner of a noble life on earth, and a nobler life in Heaven.

5. But this chapter is especially allotted to the bringing out of the true, Formative Agency of the Church.

All classes of Religious Teachers, as we have said, are Formative agents. Indeed, every member of a church, who is a Christian, is strictly a

Formative agent; little as he may think it, and humble as may be his views of himself. The whole membership are, in a sense, by the Scriptures, divided into three classes.

First and foremost, stand Christian Ministers. Their work is made purely Formative—*educational.* They are required to "Go, and teach all nations, baptizing them, and teaching them to observe all things that Christ has commanded."

The term "*teach*," it will be observed, occurs twice in this direction. In the first instance, it means *disciple;* that is, make disciples; and so relates to those rudimental instructions to sinners, which begin to form them to Scriptural thought, affection and life. In the second instance, "*teaching*"—"teaching them," means, instruct the discipled and the baptized, in the strict observance of all Christ's commandments, and so relates to the building up of Christians on the foundation laid in their renewal and conversion; and implies growth and advancement in strict conformity of sentiment and spirit and life to the inspired standard of Christian character.

And thus, it will be perceived, that the whole work of a Christian Minister, includes the *two parts;* bringing sinners to the infancy of Christian character; and advancing Christians to its

manhood. And it must be so, to make their work harmonize with the Scriptures, which most plainly address sinners, with a view to their Christianship; and Christians with a view to their mature Christianship. And hence, the Apostle. "Christ, whom we preach; warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

6. Next, Christian Parents are Formative agents. Their work, like that of ministers, is made purely Formative—*educational.*

They are required to "Bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." To bring up a child to manhood, *physically*, is to feed and clothe, and exercise, and fully develop, and generally care for his body, during minority; thus producing physical power—executive power. To bring up a child to manhood, *mentally*, is to exercise and develop the powers of his mind by study; thus producing intellectual power—the power to grasp and enjoy truth. And to bring up a child to manhood, *religiously*,—"in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," is to employ, develop, and enrich his understanding; and engage and purify his heart; and elevate and enoble his life, by the study, the perception, the love, and the habitual practice of inspired truth; thus

producing moral and spiritual power—the power to perform duty, resist temptation, and endure trial to the end.

True religious education, whomsoever the educator may be, confers such sublime power, as certainly as physical and mental education, power of body and power of mind. And it is the lofty mission of the Christian parent, to bless his child with this three-fold power; and thus confer upon him all that is great and good, in a full, physical, mental, and moral manhood.

7. And last, the Christian Church, herself; and every true member of it, is a Formative agent.

Plainly, as ministers are required to "Preach the gospel to every creature;" and plainly as parents are required to "Bring and train up" their children in the ways of the Lord; so plainly are all the members of the Church required to "Let their light so shine before men, that they may see their good works, and glorify their Father in heaven." This direction teaches, that each member, and all the members, old and young, great and small, male and female, should so impart, by lip and life, their religious knowledge to impenitent men, that they shall be won to the service and glory of God.

Thus, the first work of each member perfectly

harmonizes with the first part of a minister's work on impenitent men; and with the work of parents on their impenitent children. The true work of all is purely *educational;* and, first of all, the education of the impenitent.

And if we now add to this, the layman's commission to preach the gospel to every sinful creature, a variety of special directions, to each and every member, as based upon his individual piety and church relationship, we shall see that *a large, Social, Religious service and activity* are required of him, of most direct bearing upon the spiritual improvement of himself, and of his fellow-members.

Sec. 2.—Social Religion; its obligation.

The following are a few of the *special directions*, on Social Religious Duty, to which we have just referred. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another daily." "When ye come together into one place to eat the Lord's Supper, tarry one for another." "This do in remembrance of me." "How is it, then, Brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath an interpretation.

Let all things be done to edifying. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted." "Seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church." "If the whole church be come together into one place, and all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, he is convinced of all." "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs; singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." "Confess your faults one to another and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." "If two of you shall agree on earth, as touching anything they shall ask, it shall be done for them. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." "Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee, and him alone; if he will not hear thee, then take one or two more. If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church."

Now, when we add up all these numbers—all these teachings of Christ and his Apostles—we have *Primitive Social Religion*, as it consisted, in frequent gatherings together for worship; in edifying instruction in the truth; in kind admonition

of wrong and of danger; in earnest exhortation to faithfulness; in mutual confession and prayer; in faithful Corrective discipline; in solemn celebration of the Lord's Supper; and in singing psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs. Thus, most clearly showing the Primitive Churches to have been *real schools* of Christ; steadily aiming to make all their members, *real disciples—actual learners;* constant in attendance, deeply studious, and continually growing in knowledge, grace, spirituality, and attractiveness; thus making the Body the true "Light of the world" by its example; and the very "Salt of the earth" by its influence.

And how clearly all these Social Gatherings, and every act of worship in them, mark them out, as strong Formative measures; and all the actors in them, pastor and people, old and young, male and female, as real Formative Agents.

How clearly, then, also there rests upon all Christians, in all ages, the high obligations of Social Religion.

But, how sharply, this view conflicts with the *non-membership course* of some, who claim to be Christ's disciples, but have never entered His school; are never present as students, only as spectators; who, all their lives, skirk the labors

and the responsibilities of actual membership; and who, when speaking of their course, in this respect, rather boast an innocence, than confess a wrong.

Their non-membership course is equally unnatural in them as men, and as Christian men. Because, the social tendency, which runs through all grades of Being, from simple animals to the Persons of the God-head, would naturally bring them in; and then, the more and the sooner, the stronger affinity—the higher, subtler attraction of Holy Minds. So that, disregard of the obligations of Social Religion, is acting *as falsely* to nature and grace, as to inspired law.

And how severely this view reproves *the non-improvement course* of others; who, although they readily join Christ's church school, are irregular in attendance; positively unstudious; and really non-improving; really need to be taught, when they ought to be teachers; still babes, when they ought to be men, in knowledge. Because, improvement is as really the natural order of the Church, as the school.

Sec. 3.—Religious instruction to the young. The Scripture Law to teach the Young, the basis of Sabbath School and Bible Class instruction.

If, now, to the foregoing special directions to Ministers, Christian parents, and all Church members, we add those Scriptures, *requiring and giving instruction to the young*, we shall have covered the chief scriptural ground of Formative agencies and measures *in* and *by*, the church.

The duties of parents, as such, are of course, duties to the young. "Thou shalt teach these words diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

The Scriptures abound in notices of, and in instructions to, the young, in perfect harmony with those, addressed to parents. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." "Rejoice, O, young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee, in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou that for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment." "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the

law of thy mother." "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not." "If thou wilt receive my words, so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest for her as silver; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path. So shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and men." "Continue thou in the things which thou has learned, knowing of whom thou has learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation." "I love them, that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me."

The Scripture law, then, is, *Teach the young.* Mould them to the Christian character. All classes of Religious Teachers, therefore, must tenderly regard and carefully promote, the moral and religious interests of the young, in order to act in harmony with the Scriptures.

And hence, although Sabbath Schools and Bible Classes are not known to the Scriptures, as such, still, the work done in them is, emphatically, the great work of the Bible. Most clearly, they are both Formative Measures of the highest Scrip-

tural authority and importance, in view of the *nature* of the work they do; and the *time of life* they do it. They proceed upon well-settled principles;—principles, that identify them with the first institutions of religion, and the highest interests of the intelligent universe. Namely, that Religion consists in the knowledge, love and service of God; that such religion is not found in children, nor adults, in the fallen state; that no literary or mere external, moral training can confer it; that biblical instruction is the appointed and only instrumentality for its production in human character; that the earlier this instruction is imparted, the better; and that Schools and Classes, held upon the Sabbath for this purpose, are the very happiest measures. And thus, Sabbath-School and Bible-Class teaching stands, side by side, with Public Instruction, and Social Edification. They are, most evidently, part and parcel, of God's great system of agency and measure, to recast the fallen race.

Sec. 4.—On the true grounds of success in Formative work; talent, piety culture, &c.

Having thus before us, all the Scripture classes of Religious Teachers, and the measures they

employ in teaching, we turn to our main point, to consider, all these Agencies and Measures, in the *grounds* of their success, and the *causes* of their failure.

If now, we take Preachers and Preaching, as the chief class and measure, of religious teachers and teaching; and carefully consider the grounds of *their* success, and the causes of *their* failure, we shall find the grounds and the causes which operate to help, or to hinder, in their work, all other classes of Religious Teachers. For the work of all is the same. They all have the same soil to cultivate; the same instrument of cultivation; the same aids and obstacles, within and without; and so, must succeed or fail for the same reasons.

Success supposes an effort to gain an object. The object, in this case, is the formation of the Christian Character. Three-fourths, or three parts of such character are *mental*—belong to the mind—respect the action of the understanding, heart, and will. To form a character so largely mental, there must be large, personal adaptation in the preacher, to meet the demands of mind, as the basis of his success. Indeed, his success or failure will be, *as his personal adaptation to meet the demands of mind.* The whole practical force of any agent, lies in his adaptation to his work.

We allude, rather to the *immediate*, than remote requisites of success; more to those *high spiritual qualifications*, which the preacher, as every teacher, has need to bring to his work, than to natural gifts, simple piety, or literary culture. Although Teachers of every class, must have something of all these attributes, in order to any reasonable hope of success.

In passing, we may, very briefly, notice these, more remote and fundamental requisites of success.

The Apostle, on *natural capacity*, says that, "A bishop must be apt to teach, and sober." The phrase, *apt to teach*, implies the power to conceive, to arrange, and to express thought. And the term, *sober*, relates to natural soundness of mind; and means that the minister must have a well-balanced mind; a mind, that having apprehended the truth, will hold it firmly. And both terms teach, that he must be a clear, deep, steady thinker; not an ultraist, and thus capable of pushing principles and measures to extremes; nor a fanatic, governed rather by imagination and enthusiasm, than sound judgment; but a reliable man, both as to capacity and uniformity of doctrinal and practical position.

The Saviour, on *piety*, says, that a man "must

be born again." The new birth of the Spirit, is an indispensable qualification of the preacher. It grafts piety on to talent, and secures fruit of true, spiritual flavor. It adds the relish, to the perception of truth. A strong mind might grasp the truth, the renewed mind, alone, can relish it. The preacher has need, not only to see the beauty of the truth he exhibits; but taste its unutterable sweetness for himself. This pure, spiritual perception and relish of the truth, which the new birth, alone, gives, is the natural and indispensable basis of an overflowing, overpowering unction in preaching it.

And now, if we will add to these common-sense teachings of Christ, and his servant, Paul, on gifts and grace, those other inspired instructions to Ministers, on "reading," "meditation," "study," "continuing in things, learned," and "holding fast things, taught," we shall see a large, Scriptural ground for *mental culture* in Ministers, as well as all religious teachers. And then, if we only glance at the *nature* of their work, we shall, the more clearly, see its high necessity.

A minister is a Religious Educator. His business, therefore, is three-fold; to train the *understanding*, to close, biblical investigation, thus forming it to the habit of correct, inspired

thought; to train the *heart*, to the exercise of religious emotions, thus forming it to the habit of deep, spiritual interest; and to train the *will* to prompt, religious decision, thus forming it to the habit of ready submission to God. Thus does he religiously train the mind to the three great classes of mental action; suited to the three great faculties of the mind; and suited, also, to the three great features of the Bible; subjects, objects, and laws. And the simple, legitimate fruit is religious thought, religious interest, and religious purpose; the three things which constitute the inner basis of the outer religious life; and the three things, therefore, that constitute the sum of religious education.

How clear, then, if such is the nature of his work;—if an Educator—a Religious Trainer, that he, himself, must be educated and religiously trained. In order to meet the demands of mind and depraved mind, he needs varied culture, Literary and Theological.

In the first place, he should be a man of *decided, mental power*. Education gives this. Education disciplines the mind. It exercises and strengthens the perceptive, the retentive, the reasoning, and the imaginative powers. The mind, thus exercised and disciplined, is the

stronger for it, just like the blacksmith's right arm, that wields the hammer, and his left hand, that grasps the tongs. The mind, exercised and disciplined, is the stronger for it, just like the laboring man's body. In the one case, we have physical strength—muscle; the fruit of manual labor; in the other, mental strength—brain; the fruit of mental labor: two kinds of strength, but one process of manufacture—*education*.

Thus, the true service of education to the mind, is to confer upon it simple power—increased power; the power, definitely, of quick perception, strong reasoning, and clear illustration; the power, also, of knowledge; and the power of language, the medium and the dress of thought.

And true, Theological education gives the *knowledge* of the Bible, and *skill* in the presentation of its truths; the two things, that emphatically, make the minister;—*knowledge* of the Bible, and *power*, to wield it with effect. And Theological education is a *failure*, whether by its own fault or not, unless it confer that power; a power, which resides in the thought, in the emotion, and in the address, combined; and which is, therefore, secured by the culture of the *heart*, and the *manners*, as well as the intellect. The *whole man* must be formed in the Seminary, in

order to *whole formations*, out of it. The impression will be as the type; and the type as the manufacture.

Now, with such thorough, Theological culture; superadded to sterling native talent, true piety, and faithful literary discipline, how plainly the Preacher is largely fitted for his work, as a Religious Educator. For, all these are high elements of ministerial power; and must go in, and go far, towards making up his adaptation to successfully meet the demands of mind.

But we alluded, specially, to personal adaptation to meet the wants of mind, in relation to *the present spiritual qualifications* of the Preacher, or Teacher. Suppose, then, for illustration, that the preacher has before him, a congregation, class, or individual hearer.

Now, if he have *thought*—the exact thought of the text, paragraph, or lesson, in hand; if he have, by hard, prayerful study, really mastered its meaning; and if he bring out that thought and meaning, clearly, he meets the demand of the *understanding*. The understanding of his hearer is aroused and brought to labor. Mental labor induces mental labor. Thought begets thought. And a state of *conviction*, legitimately follows. And thus, the first point of success is gained.

And this degree of success, shows the preacher's adaptation of *intellect* for his work, as to its natural power, its culture, and its present state of preparation by close study.

Now, in contrast with this, some ministers ascend pulpit stairs without any such ample preparation; and have, consequently, no attention, and secure no conviction. A minister once said to a new congregation: "For two Sabbaths, I have labored, and failed to fix attention and interest you. You all appear as though you expected nothing." An intelligent lady, afterwards, replied: "True, your remark may be, for, for six months past, we have had nothing." They had had a man in the pulpit; but still, had had nothing. He was simply an empty pitcher; and left his people, where he found them, with unslaked thirst, and dissipated attention, and minds instinctively wandering in quest of something. The lack of hard mental labor in the study and in the pulpit, had caused the want of it in the pew. Sure as the minister is a close thinker, such will his hearers become. And sure as he meets the natural demand of his own mind for thought, he will meet that, of theirs; and will receive, at once, their fixed attention, as the fruit and evidence of the fact.

Again, if the preacher have *feeling*—strong feeling, deep interest, high emotion; enkindled by the Holy Spirit and by the subject which he presents and presses upon the consideration and acceptance of his hearers, he meets the demand of the *Heart*. Because, heart speaks to heart. "As in water, face answereth to face; so, the heart of man to man." Heart moves, and melts heart. Thus sympathy is awakened, and tears flow, and blessing descends; and a state of pure, strong, religious *interest*, is produced. And thus, the second point of success is gained. And this second degree of success, shows the preacher's adaptation to meet the demand of mind, far as the high, spiritual culture of his own *affections* is concerned.

And again, if the preacher is, himself, a man of marked *religious decision* of character, as well as conviction and interest, and is seen and felt, by his hearers, as yielding his whole being, to the claims of those laws, and the force of those motives, which he presses on them, then, is the demand of the *Will*, met. For, a *right example* a *wholly* right example, is the embodiment of all laws and motives; and, instantly commands both admiration and imitation.

This, now, is success the highest and the

truest; and a success, under God, which follows from the *present, personal, spiritual adaptation* of the preacher to meet the whole demand of mind. And, we scarcely need add, that the whole secret of this adaptation—the adaptation of success—lies in the fact, that the preacher had first met the demand of his own mind. He won his hearers, because, he first won himself. "Take heed unto thyself and unto thy doctrine; continue in them; for, in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee."

There is one other ground of success, which we may mention. It may be called an *external ground.* We mean, *simple speaking*—simple speaking, as the best manner of giving full expression and force to talent, piety, culture, and high devotion, in the presentation of truth to the mind.

The simple office-work of the Bible, as we have seen, is to present inspired truth to the mind, as through the *eye* in reading. But, the office-work of Preaching or Teaching, as we have, also, seen, is to present the same truth to the mind, through the *eye* and *ear* both; and thus, with the greater effect. Its function is to render the truth plainer to the understanding, more impressive to the heart, more determining to the will, and more re-

forming to the life, than its simple reading could do. And thus prove the truth of some one's saying, that "A scholar would learn more from the mouth of an able teacher in ten minutes, than from a book in a whole day." So an hearer, from an able preacher. Reading has its advantages. It brings the truth to the eye and the mind; and is, therefore, enjoined as a rich and effective, though silent, means of saving knowledge.

But Preaching, or Teaching Christ has evidently chosen as something greatly in advance of it; as something specially adapted to arouse and instruct men—to convince and impress them—to reform and save them. And far as preaching is true to itself; true to its appointment, and its profession, such results ever follow. It is a fact of history, observation and experience, that whenever a preacher has been seen and felt, as giving utterance to the whole counsel of God, in a spirit of true earnest faithfulness to the souls of men, that his hearers have been as certainly moved as himself. Sure as waters flow and bodies fall, by fixed law; so sure, really aroused and convinced, himself, the preacher arouses and convinces those that hang upon his lips. There is always a telling power, in the presence, and voice, and action, of the living preacher, when these all bear the

impress of the all-pervading convictions of his own understanding, and the burning earnestness of his own heart. And it is so, because man, addressing his fellow man, was made to affect and move him. "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." And it is so, especially, because, the preacher, grappling with the thought, and glowing with the life of religion, is employed by the Divine Spirit to infuse that thought and that life, into the dark understanding and dead heart of his hearer; and thus is "the gospel preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven." It is in this way, the gospel has always been propagated. It is, by the contact of a living ministry with a dead world, that Christ Jesus has ordained to save that world. And hence, His command: "Go, teach all nations, baptizing them." Baptizing them! Of course, because, of course, *disciple them.* Certain success lies out upon the very face of the direction. And hence, the brilliant successes that attended the primitive preachers, while acting under this Commission. And hence, also, in earlier time, how the Baptist swayed the multitudes that thronged him upon the beaten shores, and beside the consecrated waters of the Jordan. And how Whitefield, in later times, carried the thousands

upon thousands, that hung breathless upon his lips. Christmas Evans said of him, that "persons, under his ministry, wept, and cried for mercy, and even fainted by the power of his influence." And how true—how very true, in Whitefield's own case, his own remark, that "An earnest minister will make an attentive congregation." And he might have added, "an anxious and a convicted one." As in the time and case of another earnest preacher; "Now, when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the Apostles, Men and Brethren, what shall we do?" "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

Preaching, then,—the real address of the truth of God to the mind of man, by the *living Teacher*, who thinks it, and feels it, and lives it, and proclaims it; based as it is, in the soundest philosophy, and embraced as it is, in the plan of God, is most plainly adapted, to large success over any other form of its presentation. Such ministry, indeed, was made to tell, in its every exercise. Ministers, like Peter, would pierce their hearers to the heart, in every wielding of the sword of the Spirit, did they but first lay its keen

edge upon the flesh of their own hearts. Self-closeness gives the power of closeness. If a preacher is really, spiritually close with himself, he will be close with others, and will be successful. And if not close with others, it demonstrates deep, personal, spiritual deficiency. And here comes out the secret of a world of failure in an office, every way adapted to success. For it is this very *closeness*, this true *spirit of faithfulness*, first to one's own soul, and then, to the souls of others, that alone, turns everything of talent, and culture, and position, and influence to the high account of success.

Sec. 5.—On the common causes of failure, in Formative work; want of high spirituality, want of knowledge of the mind, etc.

While a low spirituality may be the great, prevailing cause of failure in our Formative work, there are other causes that may put our *Philosophy*, our *Theology*, our *Perseverance*, and our *general plan* of Church Worship, at fault.

1. Our *Mental Philosophy.*

We must ever bear in mind, that the product, for which we labor, in all departments of teach-

ing, is a well-balanced, reliable Christian Character. In laboring to reach such result, the Preacher may fail, for the want of *a clear view of the mind*—of its faculties, and of their individual function and demand, in order to such character. As the Farmer must understand the soil he cultivates, in order to successful husbandry; and the Physician, the body he treats, in order to skillful practice; so the Preacher must understand the mind he molds, in order to address the understanding and heart, *in due proportion;* and thus produce a well-balanced mind and character. It is not enough, that light be shed upon the understanding, alone; or, that interest be awakened in the heart, alone. Light and interest must both exist, at the same time, in combination, and in due proportion, in order to preserve the true balance of the mind. And, unless the preacher does well understand this, he will signally fail. If he address the understanding, *chiefly*, he will freight the mind with thought, down to the water's edge, and leave it there, to rot and sink, because not a sail is unfurled to catch the breezes of heaven. And, on the other hand, if he address the emotional nature of man, *chiefly*, he will excite, and bring his hearer to quick decision, and prompt action, and over-action, only to pave the

way for ruinous reaction. In either case, he equally and signally fails; and fails for the want of a knowledge of the mind.

Indeed, so essential to a Minister's success, is a thorough knowledge of the mind, that even such knowledge of it, as he gains in the Schools is not sufficient. To his school and book knowledge, he has need to superadd that which comes from actual, experimental contact with men. The contact, for example, of the Physician. The Doctor is, emphatically, a studious, practical, and successful man. His success arises from adaptation. And his adaptation from his intimate knowledge of cases, gained by personal contact, and individual examination. Now, it is, precisely, such contact with men, that will give the minister a far-reaching insight into the nature and conditions of mind; without which, he will signally fail, in producing the result in question; a well-balanced, reliable Christian character. Because, such character was never yet produced, without proper treatment of the mind. And such treatment would bring ministers, at once, from the extremes, whether intellectual or emotional. And, it would seem that the *genuine fruit* of their disproportionate labor, would drive them to the true, central point. For, men of the best minds and

culture, who rather work their intellects, than exercise their affections, make men and leave them, like themselves, deep, dry, cold thinkers; and slow actors; men all head, without heart and feet. A fruit, perhaps, no more genuinely monstrous, than a being with heart and feet, but headless; the legitimate product of the opposite extreme and style of labor. The demand of the times, in the higher circles, is, the greater culture of the affections. It is the large, warm heart, with the large, clear head, that constitutes the true balance of the mind; and stamps the life with a uniform and noble activity. But, in vain do we look for such "*highest style of man*," till a better knowledge of the mind ensures its right treatment.

2. Our *Theology*.

Failure may arise from another cause, the want of *a proportionate presentation* of Doctrinal and Practical truth.

The Preacher has need to bring to his aid, not only a sound Philosophy, but a sound *Theology*. "The whole counsel of God," is an admirable admixture of doctrine and practice. The true doctrine infallibly yields true practice. And true practice is ever based on true doctrine. The Divine and the Human agencies, in the formation of the Christian Character, are parts of a system.

And if the Preacher does not understand this, his preaching will be marked, by an excess of doctrine, or of duty. He will unduly magnify the fact of dependence, or the duty of action. Whereas, the channel of truth lies between the two extremes, as between two banks. If he, therefore, occupy one bank, or the other—one extreme or the other, instead of the whole ground; if his own mind is not rightly, scripturally balanced; if he do not equally enjoy those distant and apparently antagonistic parts of Revelation, *dependence* and *activity*, he will fail duly to teach and impress both the work of God and the duty of man. And fail, therefore, also, in producing a well-balanced religious mind and character; for it wants the whole truth for the whole mind, in order to such result. The mind demands all the truth provided for it; and the truth demands all the faculties, necessary to embrace it. It is only, therefore, by addressing the whole truth to the whole mind; and thus meeting the natural demand of both, that we reap a whole success, in the shape of a well-balanced, reliable Christian Character.

3. Our *Perseverance.*

Failure often arises from another cause, the lack of *perseverance* in our work, as Teachers. We

may fail in none of the things mentioned up to the last. We may have talent, and piety, and culture, and devotion, and intimate acquaintance with the mind and the truth; and may bring all these harmoniously to bear upon an individual, up to the point of his conversion to Christ; and then, and thereafter, fail. Because, we do not perseveringly hold on to him, until his *religious habits are thoroughly formed.*

I need only add; a well-balanced, reliable, Christian Character is never formed, until all the mental and practical acts which constitute it, have been repeated, and repeated unto *confirmed habit.* And it is the Teacher's high and responsible work, to perseveringly superintend all this process of formation: "watching for souls as they that must give account," until they "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."

Sec. 6.—On a Special Cause of failure; wrong division of Ministerial labor.

There is one great and Special Cause of failure, in our Formative work, which remains to be mentioned. We mean, *the wrong division of Ministerial labor.*

The following, it appears to us, is the true

division of a Minister's time and work. 1. *Preaching one Sermon*, each Sabbath morning. 2. *Holding a Congregational Bible Class*, at such hour as suits the convenience of the church. 3. *Conducting a Social Religious Meeting*, in the evening as the third and concluding Sabbath exercise. And 4. *Studying* his one weekly sermon and Bible class lesson; and *Visiting* his people, on a plan, that will reach all within reasonable times.

The reasons, favoring this division of Ministerial time and labor, are the following:

1. We now, have *too much preaching;* not too good preaching, but too much public preaching—too many sermons—more than it is a privilege, either to preach or to hear. Ministers are too severely taxed with study, and confinement, and anxiety to prepare two or more sermons per week, for the same congregation, as good as they are expected and ought, to be. Their situation is unnatural and uncomfortable. There is a friction which wears and exhausts, and gradually works discouragement; and finally, becoming insupportable, is relieved, temporarily, by *change*. But, "'Tis a poor relief we gain, to change the place" of settlement; but "keep the pain" of the same mischievous plan of exhausting, useless labor.

And as to the Church, they know and feel that

the Ministry is a great and blessed Formative measure, of Divine appointment, of which they could not consent to be deprived. But they often feel, too, that we may have *too much of a good thing.* They may not say it, but they act it. They show by going home, or staying home, from the second sermon, that as it was really no privilege for the minister to prepare it, so none for them to hear it. And the wrong lies not so much in the wicked indifference of pulpit, and pew, to good things; as in the weakness of both, in allowing a provision to be made, that nature and grace both decline as uncalled for; and therefore, useless, and therefore, damaging. Must not such literal task-work be as displeasing to God, as it is unprofitable to men?

Let the second sermon, then, be dismissed; and let the Minister bestow something like the time and the labor on the *one sermon*, he would on the two; and then, lay out his whole strength on it, Sabbath morning, when he is fresh to preach it, and the people fresh to hear it; and there will be a mutual privilege felt, and profit found, that will just demonstrate, that *one sermon* is preaching enough for one day; both for minister and people, in view of the actual demand of mind, and of spiritual growth.

2. A second reason, favoring the aforesaid division of Ministerial labor, is, we have *too little pastoral visitation.*

Taxed too severely in one direction, ministers are necessarily deficient in another. They preach in public too much; "*from house to house*" *too little.* If much of the time, spent in seclusion, in the deep study of Books, were spent in visitation, in the close study of Men, for the express purpose of acquaintance with individual mind, and with mental conditions, in all their immense diversity of type; and for the purpose of supplying appropriate instruction; so that, the Minister should be known and felt, by all he chanced to meet, as an intelligent, earnest, faithful, spiritual guide; becoming "all things to all men, that by all means he might save some," the legitimate and blessed *results* would be, a large and precious acquaintance and high mutual sympathy and esteem between pastor and people—a greatly increased attendance of the neglected and neglecting many, along with the favored few, upon his preaching—better adapted preaching—preaching more enjoyed both by pastor and people, because rarer and richer—and, of course, preaching, crowned with the fair fruit of an higher spirituality, and a sustained activity in the church; and with numerous additions of "such as shall be saved."

3. A third reason in favor of such division of labor, is, the Pastor might thus become *the able Teacher of a most useful Bible Class* in the church.

A Bible Class, where the Teacher has bent himself down to the most ample preparation; and where the exercise is conducted in a truly teachable, devotional spirit, is one of the very best Formative measures. The Bible Class, however, it is painful to admit, has few attractions to the mass of church members. And the reason is obvious. A true Bible Class—just the right thing—has never been within their reach, it may be; or, if it have, they have never reached it. They know, for some reason, little or nothing of Bible-class study and advantages, by actual experience. And Bible-class work, and profit, and pleasure, are things, like religion, better known by experience, than by description. Persons of fair mind and faithful application to the study of the Scriptures in the Bible Class, have, confessed to a surprise at the value of the exercise, which is akin to the surprise of the simple convert to religion. "Behold, the half was not told me!"

The importance of greater scriptural knowledge in the church, has, at times, been so much felt, that expository preaching has been strongly com-

mended, and often tried. But few, only, like it. Now, the Bible Class is better; as easier, both for Pastor and people, by change of manner; as less dry, and more interesting by the closer contact of mind with mind, and of mind with the truth; and as being thus decidedly self-sustaining. Thus, "extended views a narrow mind extend;" and often force the utterance: "How much better it is, to get wisdom than gold!"

Now, that the rich Bible-class experience of many, may become the experience of all; and that all may be converted to a life of close scriptural study;—let a Bible Class, for all the Church and Congregation that can attend, be commenced, by the Pastor, as *Teacher;* as a permanent institution; as a settled part of the Sabbath exercises, as much as the preaching of the morning and the praying of the evening.

The best Bible-class *plan* of study, we think, is the *Paragraphic;* which takes a paragraph, at a time, for a lesson; examines its language, defines its subject; deduces its lessons, and considers its connection and bearing, as a link in the chain of the Narrative.

First, it takes a *Paragraph for a lesson.* A paragraph contains one subject, and is, therefore, the very quantum for a lesson. The human mind

wants one thing at a time, and the whole of that. Sometimes, it is true, a paragraph may be rather long, or rather short, for a lesson. If too long, it may be divided. Its length and importance may justify division, and the spending of two weeks in its study. If too short, two paragraphs may be taken, as is sometimes convenient. In which case we have the whole of two small things; and that is better than parts of several, according to the old, "verse-a-day" system, which cut paragraphs all to pieces; thus wholly robbing the mind of wholeness of subject, and unity of view. But, as a very general thing the paragraphs of the inspired Narratives, are of very suitable length. Mathew, for example, contains one hundred and sixty-seven paragraphs; one hundred and forty-one—more than three-fourths of which—are of very convenient length. And the Epistles, though having their scope, will be found to be made up of very natural parts; and to be susceptible of very convenient divisions; and when each division is held, with the scope of the letter, the mind is satisfied and profited, according to the Divine intention. And when these ends are not gained, it demonstrates the bad handling of a good thing. With a paragraph, then, for a lesson,

Second, *Explain its language.*

Examine every term and phrase, critically; and thus, get the Classical and Historical meaning, and Scriptural use, of every word. Until the language of a paragraph is thus mastered, its Subject cannot be understood, and its Lessons, learned. The language is the dress of the subject; the first thing seen, and to be examined. The language explained,

Third, *Define its Subject.*

The paragraph has one Subject. That is what makes it a paragraph. State the one thing on which it treats, clearly—in the fewest and best terms. The mind is feeling after this; the subject, in simplest dress. State it, then, rightly, and meet the demand. The subject defined,

Fourth, *Deduce the sentimental and practical Lessons* it teaches.

The subject of the paragraph teaches something to be believed and to be practiced. For all inspired truth is addressed to our powers of faith and works. The point now is, to settle accurately, its precise teachings, that we may rise up and go away to incorporate them into our forming characters.

And last, *Consider the paragraph in its connection*, as a link in the chain of the Narrative; and its value as a part of the whole account.

The Paragraphic Plan, thus briefly explained, it will be perceived, is commended by the following facts. It is purely *natural.* To study the Hebrew, Greek, Latin, or English language of a paragraph, in order to reach its subject, and its lessons, is to follow, alike, the order of nature and necessity. It is thoroughly *exhaustive.* It extends its researches to everything, in the meaning of language, in the nature of subjects, and in the character of lessons. It fully meets the *demand of mind;* answering every inquiry, which its thirst for knowledge prompts it to ask. It makes the close student, *master* of the lesson, so that as he sees it clearly for himself, he can explain it fully to others. It is a plan, *suited to every paragraph.* And a plan, as experiment has shown, that wonderfully succeeds in fixing attention, in awakening interest, and in securing an invaluable progress in biblical study and knowledge.

Now, to secure the fullest advantages of such Bible Class, and such plan of its study, it will be conceded, on all hands, that the Pastor should be its Teacher. Such Bible Class would be a great Church Sabbath School; and the Pastor its natural and responsible Teacher. No man in the church, as a general thing, has better talent, and higher culture and greater facilities, and more time

(provided his time be rightly divided) to take up a paragraph, settle the meaning of its terms, grasp its subject, and gather its lessons; and thus edify, and enrich, and bless a Church Bible Class, than *he*. And would every Pastor resolve to have such Bible Class, and prepare in the best manner to meet it, and meet it, instead of preaching a second sermon, the certain results would be, in his own case, and that of his people, a greatly increased interest in its study and teachings. Such class, indeed, would become a great attraction in the church, for its felt, intrinsic profit; for its excellent social bearing; and for its direct tendency to promote social, religious activity and edification; the development of gifts, and the general usefulness of the membership. "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen."

We have seen a Pastor resolve upon his plan, announce his intention, form his class, and bend down to the faithful examination of his lesson, as to the preparation of a sermon; reducing the whole—terms, topic, and lessons—to a course of natural, well-digested, written questions, which he could *answer*, as well as ask. And the result astonished him in *two respects*. He was astonished at his own delight, arising from letting his bucket and pole, down so deep into God's well; and as-

tonished, again, in noticing the every Sabbath day's rising interest in his class. Even persons that were never in a Bible Class before, and could scarcely answer one question intelligently, would crowd around to hear every question and every answer; being saved from the embarrassment of exposing their ignorance, by the questions being all addressed—not to individuals, but to the class; all answering that could and wished—if none, the Pastor.

4. A fourth and final reason, favoring the aforesaid division of Ministerial labor, is, it would leave the Pastor *committed to, and fitted for, the best conduct of the Social Meeting.*

We have already seen, that Primitive Social Religion was marked by high activities, and great advantages; and by activities for the sake of advantages. They met often, and "Exhorted, and confessed, and prayed, and admonished one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, making melody in their hearts to the Lord." And the Lord hearkened and heard, and the places and the hearts, where they were assembled, were often shaken. Such were their activities, and such their advantages. The activities and the advantages *now*, as then, must go together, arm in arm.

It is fairly supposed that the Sermon and the Bible-class lesson of the day, have nourished and increased the spiritual strength of the church. If they have not, they have failed of their true end. If they have, then, is this increased strength of the church, the natural basis and promise of activity in the Social Meeting; as such activity is the basis and promise of the Divine blessing.

Now, it is right amidst these activities, that the Pastor takes his stand, in order to make them tell, in every way, upon the best results. This, for him, is a time and place for close observation and application; observation of the real, spiritual state of the church and the impenitent, as developed in action; and application of the sermon and lesson of the day, of which his own mind is justly supposed to be full; and of which the mind of the Church, ought to be full. His labor need not, and should not be great; only a few kind, close words of prayer, and review, and application, that all may be "gathered up and nothing lost;" thus weaving into the warp of social action and real life, the thread of the Sermon and the Lesson; and thus drawing all along with himself to "give the most earnest heed to the things taught and heard, lest at any time they should let them slip," and be lost forever.

And if the Pastor is not exhausted and empty from too much preaching and labor, during the day, he may justly be expected, to be physically fresh and mentally fitted, to lead the Social Meeting; and turn every thing to the best account. And what can render the prayers, and the remarks, and the songs of the evening exercise, more instructive, impressive and profitable, provided the Sermon and the Lesson have been so, than to preserve the same train of thought and the same strain of emotion, up to the final Sabbath benediction?

This would give a new aspect and significance to those old, unattractive meetings for conference and prayer. Members, now seldom in them, or if in them, are silent; saying nothing, because having nothing to say; and having nothing to say, and saying nothing, because they have no close dealings with the Bible, would begin to see and to feel, that the Mind was made to be fed, and nourished, and strengthened with the truth; and that such internal, spiritual strength finds its natural expression in social, religious action; and that such action is always owned and blessed of God;—in whose favor is life, and whose loving kindness is better than life. As it is written, "Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one

to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine; saith the Lord of Hosts, in the day when I make up my jewels."

In conclusion, on *right division* of Ministerial labor and public worship, we have three remarks:

First. Our own experience and observation has taught us, that, with these three Sabbath exercises—the Sermon, the Bible Class, and the Social Meeting—neither more nor less, as a general thing; all—pastor and people—will be less wearied, more profited, and better satisfied, than with any *more*, any *less*, or any *other*. But, let them all, take on the attractions of Primitive Christianity! Let all the exercises bear the unmistakable stamp, and wield the commanding sway of high intelligence, burning interest, and freest action! And, in all eyes, the Pastor is a new man; and the church, a new people; and splendid successes are reaped where all was widespread and disheartening failure!

Second. We see that Preaching and Social Religion have, substantially, an equal notice in the Scriptures; and are, therefore, substantially, equally important. Hence, to secure the largest

good, we must equally employ both classes of labor—public instruction and social edification. Because, if we go into the extreme of Social Religion, we fail in the closer investigation and larger knowledge of the truth. And so, on the other hand, if we go into the opposite extreme of Preaching, to the neglect of Social action, we fail in the higher spiritual edification, life, devotion, growth, and usefulness of the Church. In churches where the Minister does well nigh all the labor, we find spiritual weakness, and low devotion, and staid formality; but in those, where the labors of ministers and members—all, officers, rank and file—are duly proportioned, we find the best balance of things; find intelligence and devotion going hand in hand; find all equally enjoying both their appropriate labors, and their natural successes. "Brethren, let *every man*, wherein he is called, therein abide with God."

Third. If now, any good Minister of Jesus Christ, who has given much of his life to the study and the pulpit; and whose able ministry has been only very moderately successful in spiritual quickening and conversions; *will resolve afresh*, in the spirit of renewed conviction of duty, and of true faithfulness to his own soul and the souls of his fellow-men, *to* "*study* to show himself, approved

unto God—a workman" in every department of labor, "that needeth not to be ashamed;" and *will resolve afresh, to* "*preach* the Gospel to every creature" within his reasonable reach; "warning every man and teaching every man, publicly, and from house to house," in the Bible Class, in the Sabbath School and in the prayer meeting; and *will resolve afresh*, that he will lay less stress upon simple pulpit work, as to amount, and more as to effective quality—will preach fewer sermons and better ones;—and then carry out his resolves; preaching his one Sermon upon Sabbath morning, that shall show the evidence of amazing labor of intellect and heart, over the Bible and on his knees; and then bring out a Bible Class Lesson that shall give the same proof of close study and deep devotion; and follow both, with a general Social Meeting, in which all the members shall be instructed and encouraged to participate; dealing chiefly and briefly in the facts of present personal experience; and then, finally, preach ten, twenty, thirty, forty, short sermons during the week at the dwellings of the rich, and the homes of the poor, he will then, and in that case, find *this plan of labor* has the merit of being strictly Scriptural; of being universally acceptable; of embracing the true variety of labor and so of easiest perform-

ance; of securing the largest and closest contact of mind with mind; and of yielding thirty, sixty, and an hundred fold of scriptural knowledge, high spirituality, Christian constancy, sweetest fellowship, largest usefulness, and highest honor to God and man.

A fine illustration of the spirit and truth of these remarks, we find in a statement of the Rev. Dr. Wayland, at the late Anniversary of the Missionary Union, Providence, in relation to the labors of the Rev. Mr. Bixby, of the Shan Mission. "After toiling some years in Burmah, Mr. Bixby returned to this country, his wife in declining health. She died soon after their landing in America, finding her grave among the hills of Vermont. Mr. Bixby afterwards came here to Providence, and had the charge of a small church. He acted upon his old missionary plan, went from house to house, just as he would have done in Burmah, expounding the Bible, and praying with the inmates. He was thought a strange man, but God blessed his earnest efforts. His church prospered wonderfully. People here called it his 'Karen Church.' During the revival in Providence the Karen Church was more blessed than any other. The pastor was beloved, his labors were successful, and God was with him."

Sec. 7.—Special Address to Sabbath School Teachers, as Formative Agents.

In approaching the conclusion of our remarks, on Formative Agents and Measures, a few words of address to Sabbath School Teachers seem to be called for, by the importance and peculiarities of their work.

My dear Friends and Fellow Teachers: You stand high in my estimation and respect, because of the *special work*, to which you have voluntarily and gratuitously put your hands. I am constrained and disposed to put the fairest construction upon your motives. But still, good motives alone, cannot ensure success. To reap success and avoid failure in your work, there must be something in you, and of you, of *high qualification*, besides noble motives.

To give you the whole view of your work, and the qualifications you need, in the best manner in my power, let me suppose that you each have a class of six scholars. Now, you all understand the sin-ruined and exposed condition of these children. You also understand the Christian Character in its constituents of right sentiment, right spirit, and right life, unto which you are to form them. Your Sabbath School is a true Formative Measure,

and you, as Teachers in it, are true Formative Agents, so far as it, and you, really produce such character. If the measure and the agency produce not that result, they fail in their true end. In that case, your own individual work in the school, is a failure, to say the least. You also, understand, that such character, in your case, and in every case, is the result, and must be the result, under God, of the *right presentation of the truth to the mind;* and that such presentation must depend upon the *qualifications* of Teachers. But, to understand the qualifications, required in a given case, we must understand the case.

In your case, as Sabbath School Teachers, there is *what is common;* and *some things* that are *peculiar.*

In common with all Formative agents—all Religious Teachers—you have the same mind—the same immortal soil to cultivate; the same understanding to inform, the same heart to interest, and the same will to enlist. You have the same Bible in hand as the means to this end. You have the same mental faculties of your own to employ; a personal presence, voice, eyes, hands—all to speak and give forcible utterance to the truth. You have the same Almighty help to implore. And a like solemn, personal responsibility, resting upon you, for a good result.

But there are, in your case, *some things* that are *peculiar;* and that require special care and extra effort. These respect the *age* of your scholars. They are *young;* not adults, but *children.* And are, therefore, at the plastic, forming period of life; a period when the mind takes shape easily, and often permanent shape, for better or for worse. And is the time, therefore, in which you, who have this fine, fresh material in hand, to mold back to the image and beauty of Eden, should employ the highest skill, and the promptest action. For, remember, these young minds are like *new land*, mellow and rich, and of great productive capabilities. Sow, then, bountifully and *early*, the "incorruptible seed." Else, soon, behold, a pernicious crop! and you forced to confess, "an enemy hath done this while men slept!" Think of it. These young minds are like *blanks*, to be filled by some hand. And a thousand mischievous hands watch, at every corner, to mar them. You may mar them, yourselves. A mistake spoils a blank. Seize then, and wield, with consummate care, the inspired pen. The blanks are now in your hand. Again, consider, with the very tenderest interest, that these young minds are like fresh, shooting *vines;* needing assistance in their first attempts, to entwine around and ascend their

support, lest they trail, unseemly, in the dust. Will you, then, without fail, watch them each Sabbath morning; all ready, with slip and tack, hand and hammer? These young minds, again, are like *sapplings;* bent *now*, with your finger; but who can bend the oak of eighty circles? "That, thou doest, do quickly;" and "do with thy might!" Consider, also, that the minds of your young class are *immature;* and therefore, the slower to comprehend and realize. A fact, which requires of you, the most patient care, to render every thing plain and impressive. Consider, too, that their minds are *easily diverted* from a subject; and therefore, that it will require the summoning of all your power, to so interest them as to eclipse all other attractions. And then, "Childhood and youth are vanity." Consider this. Be very tender and forbearing. But fail not, to so steep your own souls in seriousness, that you will impress it on them. Let them ever breathe in your presence a sweet, subduing, serious atmosphere; and be assured, they are soon thoughtful, and serious too; and their affections for you, will be "like the tendrils on the vine, growing and clinging."

But, in addition to these remarks upon what is common, and what is peculiar, in your case and

work as Teachers, allow me to invite you to a still *closer view of your classes and yourselves.*

We have supposed, that you each have a class of six scholars. Your simple, individual business then, is, to so address the truth to each of them, as to meet the demand of their individual minds and cases. To do this, you must understand each mind and case. Now, to aid you to such knowledge, or rather, to the *way* to get it, let us call these children all up, and look at their *minds*, narrowly; look at each *faculty* of each mind, and its *state.*

1. Look at their *intellects*, as to their native strength or weakness. You, at once, see here a great diversity. Some are dull and slow of thought; others, keen and quick. Some can remember everything; others, nothing. Thus, you see, what Nature has done for them, and can the more easily see what you can do for them.

2. Look next, at their *culture.* Culture increases mental strength. The exact amount of mental strength, in each case, whether arising from nature, or nature and culture together, you must estimate and understand, if you would be able to meet the six individual demands, now upon you.

3. Look next, at the *furniture* of their under-

standings. Determine the amount of the religious knowledge of each of your class. This is much, or little, or nothing. What they each know, or do not know of truth, you must know, if you would be skillful and successful in handling their cases.

4. Look at their *hearts*. And here, again, you will see a great diversity, as to natural temperament, depraved inclination, and religious tendency. One is cool and deliberate; another, excitable and hasty; one indifferent, another susceptible; one careless, another serious; one hard and dry, another tender and tearful; one very sinfully inclined, another quite religiously disposed. Now, all these emotional states you may meet in these six boys of your class; and should understand them in their basis, whether that be nature, or education, or both. Then, can you say of each scholar; "*I know him;*" and then, can you help him. Because, a mind that can grasp a case, can grasp a remedy.

5. Look next at their *wills*. And mark them, in their native strength, or weakness; and in all their varying degrees of religious decision, from sternest rebellion against God, to measurable submissiveness. The character and state of the will, you must watch and understand, because, *decision*

is a link which necessarily connects the conviction and the interest, which you may have secured, with the action which you wish to secure.

6. And finally; look at their *practical habits.* Look at all this variety of mental power and state, as it works out into actual life and habit.

Having thus looked at your classes, and carefully surveyed the material, and the state of the material you have to mold, you will now do well to look, as narrowly at *yourselves*—at your present, *spiritual qualifications* for the high, and delicate, and solemn work which you took in hand, the moment you consented to take these classes.

First of all, you are to meet the demand of these young minds for *thought.* Then, must you *get* that thought. You cannot give what you have not got. You cannot tell what you do not know. And you cannot know the meaning of a lesson, without the labor of your own minds. *Here, right here,* let me assure you, is the great point of failure with many teachers. Because they lack hard mental labor, they lack thought; and of course, have nothing well-digested and ready to say when before their classes. Look yonder,—at Mr. Johnson, for an example. There he sits before his class, with empty mind, and vacant countenance, and silent tongue—all of a

piece—all very consistent in themselves. But, all *most utterly inconsistent* with the place he occupies!—But see there, across the aisle, an example of the true thing. Miss Rose, with lips full of instructive utterances; and countenance all aglow with liveliest interest, both in her lesson and in her class. And study is the sole cause of her better appearance. She first bent down to her lesson, in close investigation, until she caught its thought and expressed its sweetness. And now she bends over her class in solemn, affectionate interest; and, see them, bending into her fragrant and refreshing presence, thus to reap the fruit, and reward the pain, of her hard labor. The point, then, is, *master the lesson by study.* Know for yourself, that you have its exact thought; and then know that your scholars have it; and thus meet the demand of their understandings.

Again; you have to meet the demand of the minds of your class, for *interest.* God made all human hearts to be interested. And they can be interested. Children can be deeply interested in a Sabbath School Lesson. But they never were yet interested by a teacher, who has *no heart.* Or, whose heart, his class never yet saw touched with emotion. The teacher must feel; and if he does, his class will feel. Feeling begets feeling as

sure as effect follows cause. Sure as the heavenly breezes strike you, your little harvest will begin to wave. A spark of celestial fire about you, and they ignite and kindle, and flame in a moment. O! a rising emotion, that swells the teacher's bosom and mounts to the eyelids, and flows in tears, has most touching, saving power in it!

But, Teacher, you cannot think, nor wish, nor will, nor force feeling. No; true, spiritual feeling arises, if at all, from purely philosophical and evangelical causes. If you would have feeling so as to impart it to your class, just look at what is adapted to excite it; look at each and all of them, as bearing the high, mental image of God—as immortal in their existence,—as now ruined by sin, and as certain to live lives of sin, without conversion. Think of the good they must lose, and the evil they must do, by such a life; and of the death of misery and hell of torment that must ensue. And then, think that you have them in your class to-day; it may be, for the last time. To-morrow, they may sicken; next day, they may die; and thus go right from your class and your hand to ruin. And then, think of the account you must render. These things, most certainly, are adapted to stir every reflecting soul to its deepest foundations. And if you desire to feel them as you should; and

ask the Holy Spirit to "Renew a right spirit within you," *you will feel.* God will help you feel; and feel so deeply, that your class will feel your feeling. The language, their sharp eyes will read in your close thoughts and deep seriousness, will be; "My heart's desire and prayer to God, for my class is, that they may be saved." Here, then, lies all the secret of meeting the demand of your class for *interest.* Be, simply, *interested yourself*, by looking in the right direction, and praying to the right source.

Again; you have to meet the demand of the mind, for *rules and motives of action.*

God made men to act, and to act in prescribed ways, from motives, as much as He made them to think and to feel. "Sirs, what must I *do* to be saved?" is a question, as true to nature, as to the Philipian jailor's perishing circumstances. A rule, prescribing some definite course of action, was the demand of his mind, in order to avoid ruin, and secure salvation. Paul appreciated his motive; he had personally felt it. And, at once, furnished him with the rule of faith, on which he, himself, had acted in the same circumstances. Now, Teachers, the time should come, and may come, when the children in your classes, will press the same question, from the same mo-

tives. And then, and in that case, how can you tell them "*what to do*"—how they must think, and feel, and act, in order to escape hell, and secure heaven, except you, yourselves, like the Apostle, have traveled all that way, under the pressure of the same awful motives? And except the same law of faith, and the salvation and the damnation that enforce it, are kept fresh and vivid in your minds, by the constant presence of the sin, and the danger, and the duty of your own dear scholars? Let me assure you, without such experience and realization of these things, you will neither be faithful to their souls, in your usual teachings; nor prepared, at any moment of their distress and anxiety, to guide them as was the Apostle, the jailor. Besides, your classes *must see* and *feel*, in your whole presence and life, the evidence that you, yourselves, are aiming to be as right as you would make them; that you are true Christians, obeying every law you teach, and yielding to every motive you urge. For, on such conviction, in their minds, must rest your whole power to do them good. Your power to form them to the true Christian Character, will always be, in exact proportion as you, yourselves, are formed to it.

Aim, then, my dear Fellow Teachers, to be

right, in the sight of God, and in the estimation of your classes; as you would honor Him, and save them. Let Him see, and let them see, that you are painfully studious and earnestly prayerful—sincere in your Christian profession, and decided in your religious course—intelligent and sympathizing—really in earnest for their salvation, and most persevering to secure it—and my faith is, as based on inspiration and experience, that God will make the gospel you teach, and the labors you employ, His power unto their salvation; and permit you, each, the honor and the happiness of saying, in the final day: "Here am I, with the children thou hast given me;"—the six children, Thou hast given me; first, in *class;* then in *conversion;* next, in the *church;* and now, at last, in the high *companionship* of Heaven! An honor, the highest conceivable to you; a happiness, the greatest possible to them!

"He that winneth souls is wise." "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars, forever and ever!"

Sec. 8.—On Special Revival Efforts, as Formative Measures.

In this chapter, on Formative Agents and Measures, it will be natural, and perhaps, justly expected, that we should notice *Special Revival Efforts;* and especially, as they are differently viewed by different parties; and as they appear to be real successes and an honor to the cause, at sometimes; and, at others, absolute failures and a reproach.

1. The first point of inquiry is, What is *a Revival?* The Christian, not the sinner, is the subject of it. His constituents, as a Christian, are his religious convictions, interest, purposes, and activities. At conversion, all these exercises and acts are lively and strong. And were converts to live, according to the nature and promptings of these precious, spiritual beginnings, they would grow livelier and stronger, even unto the perfection of Heaven. But, owing to the influence of the world, the flesh and the devil, the Christian, at times, becomes enfeebled in all these respects. This is religious *Declension*, in its nature and causes. Now, a Revival of Religion, is the *quickening* into new life and vigor, of these enfeebled convictions, emotions, purposes, and activities.

2. Such revived state of the Christian, is always accomplished by his renewed attention to the *word of God*, and the *throne of grace*. The subjects, objects, laws, and motives of the Bible, engage his mind again; awakening fresh conviction and interest; and arousing to renewed purposes and acts of faithfulness; and prayer, always going hand in hand with Scriptural study, brings again the quickening influence of the Spirit. And the result is a genuine Revival of Religion; that is, definitely, a revival of conviction, interest, decision, and faithfulness. So, that, the Christian regains all that he had lost; and, advances to deeper convictions, more earnest feeling, firmer resolves, and stricter obedience, than his convert state ever knew. And thus is he, not only, an older, but a stronger and a better man.

3. All Revivals of Religion, commonly so called, are not revivals in the broad sense, explained. Because, *conviction* may be revived, without feeling enough to ensure action. Again, *feelings* may be revived, without light and conviction sufficient to render them pure and stable. Mere excitement they may be, not solid interest. And again, *resolution* and *action* may be revived, without much true light and true interest to support them. It takes the revival of all these, in

due proportion, to constitute a genuine Revival of Religion.

4. Such Revival is *individual;* and, in a state of declension, may be sought and secured alone, or in company. Time and place, and circumstance, matter not, essentially. At all times, and in all places and circumstances, Revival is the same thing—the same renewed inner and outer life, by the Word and the Spirit, counteracting declension, in the *individual case.* Religion is a personal thing; so declension; and so, therefore, Revival. If I seek a revived state, alone, on the desolate isle of Patmos, it, of course, must be individual; if, at Jerusalem, in company with an hundred and twenty, it is really no less so. Association with any number for this purpose, alters not my individual duty, or theirs. Individual states, with all their necessary peculiarities, must be taken up by individuals, themselves; and dealt with, most faithfully, in order to true Revival. "I will pour upon the House of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and supplication; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and mourn, as one mourneth for his own son, and shall be in bitterness as one for his first born. And the land shall mourn, every family apart, and their wives apart." "I

thought on *my* ways." "Against Thee have *I* sinned." "I humbled *my* soul." "Restore unto *me* the joy of thy salvation." Thus, the work of Revival is, and must be *individual.* If sought in company, as in case of a Church Revival effort, we may be aided by the association, according to the Divine intention; but we must not be *diverted*, as may be the case, from our own individual work. An effort, for a general Revival, is successful precisely in proportion, as all eyes are turned within; and all hands are engaged in personal work, as a *first work.* The Revival of a Church, is the revival of its individual members. This deep, primary, individual work prepares the way for utterances that come welling up from the very depths of conviction and emotion; honest, full utterances, that are, alike, the measure of our attainments in getting right; and the gauge of our usefulness in aiding others in doing so. The Church Revival, therefore, must ever be sought in the individual Revival.

5. Revivals, and Revival Efforts are no *new thing* under the sun. The Acts of the Apostles, is emphatically, a Book of Revivals. ECUMENIUS, a Greek writer of the Tenth Century, called this book "*The gospel of the Holy Ghost.*" It records Revivals at Jerusalem, Samaria, Cesarea, Antioch,

Phillippi, Thessalonia, Corinth, Ephesus and Rome. Wherever the Apostles and the Primitive Disciples went, they had but one thought, one desire, one intention, and one expectation—the revival of Christians and the conversion of sinners. Thus clearly showing, that those rich and rapid extensions of religious conviction, feeling and action, commonly called Revivals, are not some new deceptive creations of modern times; but solemn, blessed realities of every age. Such Revivals, and such Revival efforts have existed from the beginning; simply, because, from the beginning, they have been necessary to counteract declensions; which have occurred with the certainty, with which "the flesh lusts against the spirit," and the world allures from duty, and Satan tempts to sin, and water runs down hill. Declensions and Revivals have always succeeded each other, sure as the relapses and the returns of Israel. They counteract each other. "Things seen and temporal," draw off the mind; then, reaction is produced by bringing "things unseen and eternal," to bear upon it, and to arrest it; thus subjugating and controlling the strong forces of the world, for the time being.

The Church warfare, in its causes, helps, and hindrances, is precisely that of the individual

Christian. The Church declension and revival are precisely those of the individual. And the necessity and propriety of Church revival efforts, and individual revival efforts, to counteract declension, rest on the same ground; and that ground is as broad as the whole volume of Divine requirement. "Remove not the old land mark."

6. The true, special, Revival Effort has nothing *unusual* in it, except *increased interviews*, and *increased activity* in duty. The instructions are the same. The measures are the same. Nothing new or extravagant, either in matter or manner, is employed. The same gospel is preached, and the same Divine aid, sought; only with greater frequency, and naturally, with the greater earnestness, point and effect. That a revived state of the church and the conversion of sinners, should follow a proceeding so purely philosophical, and so plainly evangelical, is no marvel. For ourselves, we expect fruit with greater certainty, than from the labors of the field.

Sometimes the church seems to be *invited* by the hovering Spirit, and a favoring Providence, to just such increased activity. And sometimes, also, without any very special intimations, she finds herself right in the midst of stirring scenes; how, she hardly knows. And, like "Jacob,

awaked out of his sleep," she exclaims: "Surely the Lord was in the place, and I knew it not!" And, like him, she enjoys the dread surprise; and rises to improve it, by planting down her pillar of memorial and of vow; and pouring out her oil of fresh consecration. The extra visitation demands extra effort, and receives it.

And often, again, in the absence of all special Providential indications; and all sensible intimations of the presence of the Spirit, when the Church has increased her labors, in the prescribed ways, and for the prescribed ends, under a deliberate conviction of duty, the results have been just as blessed in revival and conversion fruits.

7. Such Special efforts seem least called for in *those Churches*, which, in some high degree, are intelligent, sincere, consistent, influential, and reputably prosperous. But, even these churches—the best, we call them—pass long intervals, in which their worship is formal and powerless; attended with marked, spiritual decline, if not with much apparent neglect; and all this dreary while, not a sinner converted in their midst and added to their number. Now, a well-directed, *true*, revival effort, in such case, would work a marked and glorious change.

8. Such Special effort may be made by the

Pastor, and his people, alone; or by the Pastor and the Church, with the assistance of some experienced Minister, or brother from abroad. Both ways are right, if we take the blessing of God, as proof. And circumstances must determine the choice between them.

Provided the Pastor can bear the extra labor, nothing can be better, than the first plan. It favors the dependence of the Pastor and people, upon themselves, and the avoidance of so damaging reaction. In this case, then, let the Pastor resolve, in the strength of God, upon the required change; and begin with *himself*. Let him, simply, resolve to be *right*, as he "must give account to God;" right in his *spirit*, as he already is, in his convictions. Let him, in dependence and prayer, address himself to his whole duty, in the *true spirit* of it, far as he can; and with a view to the *full attainment of that spirit*, as indispensable to his acceptance with God, and his power with men; opening his mind to the conviction of all duty; and putting on, sincerely, the true Revival style of freedom, frankness, simplicity, directness, and readiness to every good word and work. And you have at once, a Revival; because, revival is individual. The *Pastor* is revived. Nor he, alone. Soon *another* and *another*. The *mass*

are presently stirred. "Know ye not, that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" And the work extends its influence to those without. For thus a power is produced and revealed that reaches them. The stream of conversion always flows, when its channel is cut deep and broad through the revival of the Church. Sure as truth and Divine power reach and reform pastor and people, they reach and reform sinners. Let "the fear of God" make the Church tremble, and the world feel the vibrations. This is the pure philosophical and scriptural order. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

Now, the change, demanded in the case of a great, but inefficient church, has been brought about in *the best manner*. But, suppose the Pastor, from youth, inexperience, feebleness, or any cause, feels inadequate to the proposed, extra labor; assistance may be employed, perhaps, without extra, damaging consequences.

Because, a competent assistant will not only excite, but control—not only teach, but train—not only bring men up to the line of duty, by the aid of their emotions; but fasten them there, by the strength of their convictions. Besides, we

must ever bear in mind, that all the danger does not lie on the side of "*excitement;*" so much cried down by cold, staid orthodoxy. A man may be damned, for the want of it!

9. The true, Special effort is, especially called for, in *those churches*, which, untaught and untrained to constancy, are *habitually high or low*, in their religious emotions and activities, as they are *in or out of a protracted meeting.*

Because, such true effort would teach them several important lessons.

First of all, that it is an absolute abuse of a good thing, to *depend* on an Annual Revival Effort, for spiritual life and increase. Some ministers and churches seem educated to believe, that they cannot enjoy a state of Revival in the church, attended by the conversion of sinners, *under ordiniary means.* And, therefore, lay down and rest in a sort, to them, of excusable indifference and inaction; laying aside and losing sight of, the conversion of sinners as an ever-present object. They do not seem to understand, that the conversion of sinners is the great and first end of the labors of the Christian ministry and profession; and, therefore, faithfully sought, one of the greatest means of spiritual life; and the strongest guarantee against declension. They

have need to learn, by actual observation and experiment, that if Christian Ministers and Churches would hold themselves to this labor; constantly "teaching all nations," and letting their "light shine before all men," in order that they might be brought to glorify God, that their rich experience would be *a fixed living state* of personal conviction, interest, and activity; and daily additions of such as shall be saved; and occasionally, a sweeping Pentecost—a decidedly extra time of labor, success, and enjoyment—instead of those miserable, reproachful, ruinous alternations of deadness and excitement—excitement and deadness. Thus, the true effort would teach them the true thing; that is, that Revival Efforts are not *substitutes*, but auxiliaries—select schools, in order to the best education for active life—musters and drills, in order to certain victory on the field; and therefore, efforts not to be depended on, or rested in, as ends; but at best, as *aids* in the stern, daily work of Christian life; aids to the real higher Church-life; in which every movement and exercise of the Church, the year round—every sermon—every prayer is Revival, Formative, and Reformative in its true character and real tendency; thus making Mount Zion, "the Light of the world" by constant example; and "the salt of the earth," by steady influence.

Again, the true effort would show them, that the Meetings they so much enjoy, do on them, and on others, *a very superficial work.* Else, why do they so rapidly decline in the flame of their emotions, as though their fuel were all consumed in the recent conflagration? Else, why do they go right into immediate neglect of the ordinary means of grace, as of no significance and obligation; and as if by common calculation and consent? Else, why do they seem to expect such decline and neglect, as a thing of course; and seem to expect, as another thing of course, the next year, another such like stimulant, to counteract their accustomed backsliding in heart and life; and so on, to the end of life's checkered chapter; leaving them to be no wiser and better at eighty, than twenty; still "babes," needing milk and cordial, instead of "strong men," who can stand alone, and work alone, the live-long day of Christian life? Else, if the said work is not quite superficial, why do those brought into the church, so often find and feel little to sustain and hold them; and so, very soon return to their accustomed paths of open neglect, if not, of flagrant sin? Now, such real, unexaggerated results demonstrate *superficialness of work.* "By their fruit ye shall know them." "Even a child is known by his doings."

An extra effort ought to make men extra good; ought to fit them, in an extra manner and degree, for the every-day labors and conflicts of Christian life—ought to make them, decidedly, more intelligent, more earnest, more firm, more active, and more reliable men. Protracted meetings, and all other religious meetings are valuable Formative Measures, so far, and only so far, as they actually produce such result—actually form such true Christian Character. It is not the frequent assemblings, and the preaching, and the praying, and the singing—forms of worship all good in themselves—that succeed in gaining the true end. It is *the style of the work.* That will succeed everywhere. It would succeed in a Theater, and convert it. It would succeed in a superficial, Protracted Meeting, and chasten and refine, and thoroughize it. The true style of work succeeds in every place; because it is not superficial, but thoroughly philosophical and evangelical. It addresses the whole man; and addresses the whole truth to the whole man. And thus makes him think, and feel, and will, and act, proportionately; makes him see a thing clearly; and feel it, because he sees it. Then, he feels for a reason. Then, has he something to sustain feeling. Then, is he a man of the clear perception and the strong

affection, which constitute vigorous principle—the natural and sure basis of steady, continued action. Then, is the balance of his mind preserved. Then, is he not sent out to sea with ballast alone, nor sail alone, to remain and rot and sink, in the one case; and to drift and drive and capsize, in the other, and to perish at all events; but, with ballast of thought, and sail of emotion, both, so nicely adjusted, as to ensure outriding the storm, and making the haven.

A workman, in a Special Revival effort, that needs not to be ashamed, whether Pastor or Evangelist, *will raise the breezes;* but, will as certainly *control them.* Men must be instructed, but, they must be excited, too. They were made capable of both, and therefore, for both. The legitimate function of conviction is to bring to action, and to sustain action; and that, of feeling, is to aid action. The passions are the sails of the soul, made to catch the wind and quicken the movement. True, reliable action is the fruit of both. There is nothing wrong, then, nor dangerous in *excitement*, simply considered. Only, might we so speak, salt it down well with conviction. Only see that conviction and emotion are proportionate; and you can navigate any sea, and come out of any gale, right side up. A capable Master will

thus adjust the two things—knows how to do it; by tacking this way, or that—by addressing, now, the understanding, and now, the heart; now, with this subject, now that; and thus, by the appropriate view, producing the mental state—calling up the precise thought or the emotion he wishes, according to the wisdom that meets a demand and wins a soul.

But, the *grand defect*, in superficial meetings, and with superficial workers, is—*this is not done.* Perhaps, there is even no thought of preserving the true balance of things. Perhaps, the mental powers are not understood in their individual demand, in order to such result. Or, perhaps, the real, religious standard, itself, is low—something much less than radical reformation—something, varying widely from the perpendicular—a shining profession, reached by running character up; forcing it up by spreading every sail, instead of *living it up before men;* thus demonstrating that true Religion is a matter of judgment and conscience and everlasting principle. Or, perhaps, an impatience for definite results, within definite times, forbids awaiting the slower action of men, who, with understandings faithfully addressed, solemnly weigh every step they take in the direction of "the strait gate," the church, and Eternity. Or,

perhaps, the one idea, simply, of an *intense general excitement* is all absorbing, as the great desideratum—as *the very thing*, with its rush of numbers to the sanctuary and the church—as the very thing to herald skill, emblazon reputation, and fill the purse!

And verily, verily, it is *the very thing* to pave the way for *a reaction*, and *a reproach*, and *a ruin*, and *a responsibility*, that an intelligent, conscientious man, we should think, would dread to meet!

And thus, the *true*, Revival Effort may be especially called for, in those churches which place undue dependence on extra efforts; and on certain specially superficial ones; as the true effort would be so corrective of mistaken views, and tastes, and habits; and be so powerful to instruct, and interest, and reform, and establish in "the old paths."

The sum, then, on Special Revival effort is this: In every age of the church, there have been Declensions, Revivals, and Extra Revival labors. At one time, God seems evidently, to have led his people to the labor; and, at another, his people seem to have led Him to the blessing. Sometimes, such labor has been successfully performed by the pastor and people alone; and sometimes, as suc-

cessfully by pastor, people, and evangelist. Sometimes, the effort has been a damage, through undue, uncontrolled excitement; and sometimes, useless, for the lack of it; and sometimes, the richest blessing, from the preservation of the true balance of things. Sometimes, the effort has been a decided success, through faith and dependence on God; and sometimes, as decided a failure, through faith and dependence on man.

And thus we are taught, that there is such a thing, as the *true* and the *right*, and such a thing as the *false* and the *wrong*, of Special Revival Effort; and that we do well to avoid extremes—to winnow thoroughly—burn the chaff, and garner the wheat;—in the language of the Apostle: "Prove all things and hold fast that which is good."

CONCLUSION.

We have carefully examined our subject—Formative Church Discipline—under four heads: Formative Subject, Formative Instrument, Formative Product, and Formative Agents and Measures. We have seen it practicable, in the labor of cultivating this Subject, with this Instrument, in these

ways, to reap large and cheering success, in the production of true Christian Character, in despite of obstacles; and still, we have found that there is much of saddening failure, owing to obstacles. It is plain, then, if we meet with failure, where we ought to reap success, that the next thing in the degenerate order, is "*offences*"—the sad, legitimate consequences of failure in Formative processes; which must inevitably necessitate Corrective Measures; and thus we slide down from the *First*, to the *Second Part* of our Book.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

PART SECOND.

CORRECTIVE CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

CHAPTER I.

Classification of Offences.

The simple announcement of this subject, may awaken in many hearts a degree of *pain;* because, it is at once seen, as necessarily involving the consideration and the correction of the *sins* of professing Christians. We feel a pungent sympathy with all who may be the subjects of such an emotion; and we would have avoided the occasion of these painful exercises, could we in faithfulness to our high trust, have done so. Our present situation awakens a lively fellow-feeling with the physician. He has portions of professional duty exceedingly painful and trying. Nevertheless, he may not shrink from them through the twinges of delicate feeling, or the gushings of rising sympa-

thy. Nor may the ministers of religion. To treat on the imperfections and sins of Christian professors, and the methods of correcting them, is to imitate the Oracles of God. The Bible takes things as they are; and so must we. It proceeds, in its instructions of every form, upon the principle, that the best men in the Church, *may fall* by sin; and that the mere professor and hypocrite *will fall;* that "offences must needs come;" because, remaining and prevailing depravity will induce them; and, therefore, that certain rules of procedure—certain methods of treatment, would be indispensable, in all such cases. The precept, therefore, is provided against the time and the occasion for its employment—against the "coming of offences."

And the sole design of this work, is to bring out that provision. It is not to make new laws of Discipline; but to explain old ones. It is not to be understood ourselves, independent of the Lord; but to have the Master of the house understood, independent of all men; when he speaks, describing the "*offence;*" and specifying the *rule* for its treatment.

Corrective Church Discipline is "*the right treatment of offending members.*" That is, the application of right principles, in a right spirit, to their

wrong conduct. An offending member is one, who has transgressed some law of Christ's kingdom; for, "where there is no law, there is no transgression"—no "offence." Offences, as to their magnitude, are to be estimated by the importance of the law violated. Hence, as there are different laws of Christ's kingdom—laws having different degrees of value and importance, just as there are different laws in a State; so there are different kinds of offences—offences of various magnitude; and, of course, requiring different treatment.

The consideration, therefore, of the *nature and kinds* of "offences," with their *proper methods of treatment*, must constitute the theme of that volume, which professes to treat Corrective Church Discipline, in the light of the Holy Scriptures.

There are FIVE KINDS of offences, namely, *minor*, the smaller offences; such as should be borne;—*private*, or such as cannot be proved;—*personal*, as when one brother injures another in his person, reputation, or property, and there is proof of the fact; *public*, or such as equally injure all the members, and for which all require an equal satisfaction; and *insufferable*, that is, offences of such enormity as require the immediate and positive removal of the member from the body, for the honor of the cause.

Before entering upon the particular examination of these different kinds of offences, with the rule of treatment required by each, we wish to make a few general remarks, anticipating some *exceptions* to the classification of offences which we have made; and showing the reasons on which it is based.

Under some one of these *five heads*, we think, every offence may find what, on the whole, may be justly considered its proper place. Yet there are what might be regarded, at first view, apparent exceptions. For example, a *minor offence* may inflict, to some extent, a personal or a public injury; and therefore, be, in some sense, a personal or a public offence; and yet, because it is one of such nature, as to require us to act on the rule of forbearance, we place it under the distinct head of minor offences. Again; a *private offence* is a personal one, and might be said to be one class of personal offences; but the ground on which the distinction is based, *is the total lack of evidence* in the case; and, consequently, the requisition of a different rule of treatment. For, if there are two cases, in one of which there is no evidence, and in the other, proof, do not all see that necessity will give birth to different rules of treatment? In this first case, nothing can be done

beyond private interviews. In other cases of personal offence, that is, where there is proof, investigation may be carried on to any desirable extent, because the means of conviction are in the possession of the injured brother. Hence, the ground of the distinction between private and personal offences, is the *lack* of evidence in the one case, and the *possession* of it in the other; and the *necessity* of treating them by different rules. Again; there might seem to be another exception in the case of certain personal offences which are *quite public*, and therefore nearly allied to public offences. But mark the ground of the distinction here. All real *public* offences, properly so called, equally injure all the members; but *public personal* offences do not equally injure all. All, by such an offence, may be injured, and all, because it is public, may require satisfaction; but is not one member, after all, injured more than all the other members taken together? And will he not, therefore, feel more sensibly; and by a natural necessity take hold of the work of correction? Moreover, the two cases require different *rules* of treatment. In all cases of public offence, the offender may be called upon by the church, if he be present, directly; or, if absent, in any kind, efficient manner, to give satisfaction. But in all

cases of personal offence, there requires private interviews, with a view, if possible, to settle the matter of difference; and prevent its being brought to the church. The reasons of this position will appear in their proper place. Once more; a case of *insufferable* offence, that is, one which requires immediate exclusion, may be personal or public; and yet, because it is an offence of so high an order, as to demand prompt excommunication, it receives the appellation of *insufferable*. For example, *forgery*. An offence of this kind may be to the special injury of a brother, and therefore, be personal. It may be against a man of the world, thus equally injuring all the members, and therefore, be a public offence; and yet, is properly denominated *insufferable*, because the rules specially applicable in other cases, are at once superseded, and the only true rule—the *ascertainment of the fact*, is promptly acted upon; and his excision is made, at once, as far as it can go, to wipe out the deep crimson stain upon the reputation of the church and the cause.

It will be perceived, then, that the grand reason for the classification of all offences under the preceding five heads, lies in the *nature and necessarily different treatment* of offences. Offences are almost endlessly various in their aspects; and yet,

each offence, when duly considered in its attendant circumstances and degree, will readily suggest its own class, and thus fix its own rule. Every offence is, on the whole, *minor*, requiring gentle admonition and forbearance; or *private*, requiring private correction, but justifying no farther proceedings, for want of evidence; or strictly *personal*, requiring the employment of the three steps of labor, according to the 18th of Matthew, if the wrong be persisted in; or *public*, requiring the notice and public correction of the church; or *insufferable*, demanding prompt exclusion for the honor of Christianity among men.

Having made these remarks by way of justifying the foregoing classification of offences, we proceed to the particular examination of the different kinds of offences; and the rules prescribed for their treatment.

CHAPTER II.

First Class of Offences; Minor.

To the first class of offences belong *minor* ones; the smaller offences; what are commonly called *imperfections* of Christians; such as should be borne.

For example, *Levity*, a light and trifling deportment, a want of becoming seriousness and stability. *Irritability*, the susceptibility of being easily exasperated; soon angry; habitually fretful. *Loquacity*, a propensity to talk too much; to speak imprudently. *Forwardness*, a tendency to overact; to go too far; to be obtrusive; to be the greatest. *Backwardness*, an inclination to fall upon the back-ground, to never come up to the line of duty; a shrinking from obligation and responsibility; a hanging, like a dead weight, upon the wheels of devotion and usefulness. *Littleness*, a disposition to stick and contend for one's own way in unimportant matters. It may be seen, also, in thinking more of cents, than liberal men do, of dollars. And many other like features of character. To which may be added, many of the minor and ordinary defects in Christian sentiment and Christian practice.

Now there are three views to be taken of these infirmities of Christians: why they may *properly* be considered offences; the *reasons* for forbearance; and the *rule* of treatment.

1. Why they may *properly* be considered offences. They may be so considered, because, they are plain violations of the principles and precepts of the gospel. Here, gravity, meekness,

slowness to speak, humbleness of mind, readiness to every good work, liberality, in a word, *amiability*, are directly opposed to levity, irritability, loquacity, forwardness, backwardness, littleness, in a word, *unloveliness* of character. So that, these imperfections cannot exist, without constant violations of some of the finest portions of Divine requirement. Of course, when they are seen in their fellow-members by good men, they will be, they must be, sources of lively regret; and it may be, under certain circumstances, of constant injury and suffering. Moreover, these traits of character are the more trying, because so difficult of correction. Seen in her members, they seem entailed upon the Church; and often become a living affliction to her. She sighs over repeated foibles and failures, and feels the keen anguish of an affectionate parent over an unlovely child. Still, they furnish the occasion for forbearance, as well as faithfulness.

2. We notice the *reasons* for the exercise of forbearance in such cases. In the first place, they may be *constitutional* infirmities. There is, doubtless, a very great difference in the original constitution of men; a difference, both in their mental and physical structure, as well as a difference arising from early habit and peculiar circumstances.

We have numerous specimens of such difference, not only in the members of every church, but, the children of every family. We see and acknowledge the difference; and readily admit the impracticability of making the dissimilar members alike, because, the cause of the difference lies deep, having its seat in the texture of the mind—in the gristle and bone. Cecil says of Melancthon and Luther, that "Melancthon was like a snail with his couple of horns; he puts out his horns, and feels—and feels—and feels. But Luther dashes in saying his things; cuts everything to pieces; is like a case of instruments." The difference was constitutional. And Paul has said, "Every man has his peculiar gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that;" a truth, which, whether it allude to differences in the elements of the constitution given, or in the degrees of grace imparted, equally challenges the kind consideration of our brother's peculiarities.

Hence, the reason for forbearance is this, those unhappy traits which are constitutional; or the result of early habit and peculiar circumstances, are *exceedingly difficult*, if not *impossible*, of correction, whether the individual or the church undertake the labor. Besides, it costs some men,

owing to peculiarity of constitution and habit, as much again to live Christian lives, as it does others. This consideration, alone, should induce large forbearance. We often indulge in censoriousness, where we ought to exercise commiseration. Bold Peter condemns modest John.

Again; we should remember that there are some things, perhaps, that may be viewed in the light of *constitutional deficiencies.* Well, "that which is wanting, cannot be numbered." If one scholar in your school, were naturally duller than the rest, would you not rather help, than hurt him?

All, perhaps, again, have their constitutional defects. We, ourselves, may have *our* imperfections, if not of the same kind, or so glaring and unhappy as those of others. And we are taught, while we attempt to correct others, to "consider ourselves, lest we also be tempted." If "in the same condemnation" to any extent, we do well to be lowly, rather than lifted up; sympathetic, instead of severe.

And, once more: this class of offences furnishes the *only occasion* for the exercise of forbearance. Forbearance is often enjoined as a duty. It signifies, to bear with another. But, of course, not in all cases. There are instances of high offence,

where the exercise of forbearance would be a *sin*, a cringing meanness; on other and counter occasions, a *high virtue*, a generous magnanimity. And such, we conceive, are the occasions we have just had under consideration.

3. We proceed next to examine the *rule* of treatment.

First, we premise; always consider, when an offence of the SMALLER KIND has been committed, *whether it should be the subject of Christian forbearance, or discipline.* This is the first thing to be determined, although it may sometimes be difficult to say where forbearance should terminate, and discipline begin. If, in the light of the nature of Christian infirmities, and the reasons for bearing with them, you conclude it your duty to exercise forbearance in the case, then, the *rule* is at hand. It is very simple, and striking in its application, as simple. It is found in Romans, 15: 1.

"We, then, that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves."

We, then, that are *strong;* not strong, to knock down; but strong, to bear up; strong, to sustain burdens; strong, to receive a weak brother; strong enough, to go without meat, if it make

him to be offended; strong, to please him for his good, to edification.

The rule, however, includes, not only sympathy, but *aid;* the free, faithful pointing out of defects, with the best method of overcoming them. The spirit of the rule forbids our suffering sin, or even infirmity upon a brother, provided we can aid him in working its riddance. The spirit of the rule is benevolence.

But perhaps you may determine the offence properly *disciplinable*, and not demanding forbearance. For, we believe there is one exception to the principle laid down. And, in concluding our remarks under this head, it is proper to say, that there are cases when members may be regarded, on the whole, as Christians; and their repeated offences, as constitutional infirmities, or, at least, as infirmities rooted by education and riveted by habit, and, therefore, well nigh impossible of correction; and yet, they are so great dishonor to the cause, and so great grief to their brethren, as to require their removal from the church. In the case of many, we do know it extremely difficult for them to live so, as to do honor to the cause. In the case of a few, it seems utterly impossible. And when this fact is once ascertained, they should be removed, painful as exclusion in

such case may be. It is a forcible remark of some one, that "it will be time enough to know some Christians, when they get to heaven." And why some want to be known as professors, when to be known is to be despised; why they wish membership in a church, when they cannot adorn it, is a problem we are utterly unable to solve on any principle, which would do honor to their understandings, or their hearts.

CHAPTER III.

Second Class of Offences; Private.

To the second class of offences belong *private* ones, or such as *cannot be proved.*

We have already said that private offences are personal, in a sense, because they occur between two individuals; yet, because there is *no evidence* in the case to convict the offender of his wrong, we call it a *private* offence. For example: one brother takes the property of another, yet is seen by no person except the owner; and there is an entire absence of all circumstantial evidence.

Now the rule of treatment, in such case, is the

first part of the whole rule for personal offences, given in the 18th chapter of Matthew.

"Go tell him his fault between thee and him alone;" or, in the corresponding direction of Solomon: "Debate thy cause with thy neighbor himself, and discover not a secret to another."—*Prov.* 25 : 9.

Here the Saviour and Solomon are both seen, enjoining a *private measure* for the correction of a *private offence.* The sum of the rule is this: Go to your brother alone; seek satisfaction; seek the recovery of the property, and a confession to you of the theft. "If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." If he shall say, "I took it; here it is; I am sorry;" thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear you, then mark this direction—mark it well! ☞ REBUKE IN SECRET, AND LEAVE IT WITH GOD. You must not whisper it in any ear; much less publish and emblazon it to the world. The rule says: "Tell him his fault between *thee and him alone,*" and "discover not a *secret* to another."

Now the *reason* on which the rule is based, is this; if the injured brother declare the wrong, he involves himself, because, he has not the proof in the case which the Bible requires. Suppose, for example, he presume to go one step further, and

take one or two more brethren with him, to labor the matter, (for witnesses, he has none to take.) In their presence the charge of theft is made and denied. The two attending members ask for proof; but there is none. And what can they do? They hold the two brethren in equal estimation. The word of the one, is as good as that of the other. They cannot decide, therefore, that the brother's charge of theft, however true, is sustained at all. But, on the other hand, they must become witnesses in a case *against him*, though he is perfectly innocent as to the truth of the charge. He cannot prove that the real offender has stolen; but the real offender can now prove that he is guilty of defamation. And, for example, the new trial proceeds, and he is found guilty by the testimony of the two brethren, before whom he made the unlawful exposure; and by his own admission of having charged his brother with theft, when he had no sufficient evidence of the fact to convict him before others. He is required to confess, or suffer exclusion. He cannot confess that he has lied; for he knows, before God, that he has told the truth. He is, therefore, excluded, for the church can act only on evidence. Her Lord has told her, that "in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word

shall be established."—2 *Cor.* 13 : 1. And he, failing to meet the requirement, must unavoidably suffer.

Now, how much better it had been for him, having dealt faithfully with his offending brother *in private*, to have left the matter; and borne patiently the trial from which Providence had, as yet, furnished him no means of escape; rather than to suffer, in addition to the first trial, the loss of his place among the brethren, the loss of his reputation, besides all the trouble and dishonor, totally unavailing to him, he has brought upon the church. His first case was bad; the last, worse. Hence, in all cases of *private offence*, nothing can be done for their settlement, beyond *private interviews.*

Some, however, are not satisfied with this view of the treatment of private offences. They would feel justified in the *exposure of sin;* nay, would feel it their duty to make the exposure; and do believe that God would, in some way, vindicate them. But, we ask, can they reasonably expect that God will justify them before men, when they set aside his *law of evidence?* Has he not said, once and again, to the number of seven times, that "every word shall be established in the mouth of two or three witnesses?" If, then, this

is God's way of establishing the guilt of offenders, who dare presume on a *new way* of exposure, without proof? Let all such pause and examine the statute: "*One* witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of *two* witnesses, or at the mouth of *three* witnesses, shall the matter be established."—*Deut.* 19: 15. "Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death, by the mouth of *witnesses*."—*Num.* 35; 30. "At the mouth of *two* witnesses, or at the mouth of *three* witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death, be put to death."—*Deut.* 17: 6. "He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy, under *two or three* witnesses."—*Heb.* 10: 28. "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before *two* or *three* witnesses."—1 *Tim.* 5: 19. "In the mouth of *two* or *three* witnesses shall every word be established."—2 *Cor.* 13: 1. "Take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of *two* or *three* witnesses every word shall be established."—*Matt.* 18: 16.

Next, listen to the counselings of the wise man on this subject: "Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbor hath put thee to shame. Debate thy cause with thy neighbor himself; discover

not a secret to another, lest he that heareth it put thee to shame, and thine infamy turn not away!" —*Prov.* 25 : 8–10.

CHAPTER IV.

Third Class of Offences : Personal.

To the third class of offences belong *personal* ones. Personal offences are such *injuries*, of one brother by another, in person, reputation, or property, as *can be proved*. The case in the inspired statute is thus stated : "If thy brother shall trespass against thee." The parties here, are *thy brother* and *thee*—two members of the same church. The offence is indicated by the term *trespass*, and means, either an abuse of thy person, an attack upon thy character, or a depredation upon thy property.

Now, in case of such trespass or offence, three things must be settled in your own mind, before you take a step, or say a word.

1. Determine the *real amount* of the wrong committed.

This, of course, may be less or more, and must

be something. What it really is, should be accurately determined. It should not be magnified, nor diminished. There would be injustice done to him, or you, in either case. Were we now studying and teaching policy, and not principle, we would say, rather make the wrong too small, than too great. But we do not say this. Every thing right, and sacred, and fair, demands the wrong, the whole wrong, and nothing but the wrong.* This determined, then,

2. Ascertain what *certain proof* you have in the case. If you have no proof, the offence is a private one; and you have only to see your

* The wrong, whatever it is, in nature and name, you would do well, at this time, to reduce to *writing*. There are two reasons for this: 1. Sometimes a matter of difference is more *imaginary* than real; and looks much larger in the mind, than it would on paper. If you write it, therefore, you will, by necessity, think more closely upon it, and will be likely to reduce it, and make it as small as possible, and give it a right name. 2. The wrong thus reduced to writing, will be, so far, *ready for the church*, if it have ultimately to be presented there. We believe it is a considerably common, and certainly a very business-like and safe way, for the injured brother to present to the church, *in writing*, a statement of the wrong done, with the testimony of witnesses, and a history of his course in the case. Such a paper, you perceive, contains *three* parts: 1. A statement of the injury received; 2. The testimony of the witnesses called to prove it; and, 3. A history of the steps taken by the injured member, to gain his erring brother. *Now* is the time for you to begin this paper, by a statement of the wrong done, in the prayerful hope that you may never have occasion to finish it.

brother alone. If you have good and substantial proof to sustain all you prefer, you are so far ready for any extent, to which the labor may possibly proceed. But, if you have not proof, equal to your complaint, then you must reduce your complaint to your proof. You can cut down your charges, and now is the time to do it; but you cannot stretch your proof. This done,

3. See whether *the offence would exclude him* should the brother persist in his wrong. If he have injured you, even only in a small degree, it is your privilege and your duty to see him alone, and try to show him his wrong, and to obtain satisfaction for it. But it is an INDISPENSABLE RULE, *never make that a matter of discipline, and take not only the first and second, but the third steps of labor, which, if persisted in, would not exclude the offender.* Because, it would be alike an injury to your brother, and a mortification to you, to go through all the solemn formality of a regular course of labor, and, after all, be judged by the church, as having little or no cause of action. "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on and are punished."—*Prov.* 22 : 3.

These *three preparatory steps* taken, the next thing is your *rule.* This, for all cases of personal

offence, properly so called, you have in Matt. 18: 15–17.

"Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou has gained thy brother; but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican."

We will first, explain this rule, in its simple, regular operation; and then, notice an *exception* which some make, touching its applicability to those cases of personal offence, which have been quite publicly committed.

This rule involves *three steps of labor*, as they are commonly called.

The FIRST STEP is, "Go and tell him his fault between thee and him, alone."

This, in its simple meaning, may be thus drawn out: *Go* to thy brother; visit him. Do not stay away, and lock up the disagreeable matter to sour in thy bosom, to fester in the flesh of thine heart. *Go.* Take the trouble to see him, and have a good understanding immediately effected with

him, and thus gain thy brother. "No!" you say, "he has done all the wrong, and he ought to have all the trouble. It is not my duty to go after him. It cannot be, in the nature of the case. It is his duty to come to me, and when he gets here, to make a pretty humble confession too!" Stop, my brother; you are making a new rule. The Master has settled this matter. He has spoken, specifying the *case* and giving the *rule*. He has said, "If thy brother trespass against thee." Is not this thy case? Well, then, the rule. He has also said, "Go and tell him his fault." Here is the case, and the rule for it. And then the *principle*, at the base of the rule. He has laid down the same principle for you, which he acted upon himself. He came to save you, though in all your sins. Now he commands you to go and save your brother, notwithstanding his. Moreover, he *cautions:* "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones." And he *reasons:* "How think ye? If a man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, does he not leave the ninety and nine, and go into the mountains, and seek that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoices more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine that went not astray. Even so it is not the will of

your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." And it should not be your wish that one of them should perish. "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart; thou shalt in any wise *rebuke*, and not suffer sin upon him." You must visit him, then.

But, further; go and visit him, not only, but "tell him his fault."

First, *state the matter of grievance fairly and fully.* You have already determined what it is. Now state it. Neither magnify it through anger, nor diminish it through fear.

Then, second, if he deny it, *convince him of his wrong*, by adducing your sources of proof; for so the word *tell* means. The original word is employed in several passages, where it is translated *convince.* For example, *Titus* 1 : 9 : "Holding fast the faithful word, that ye may be able, by sound doctrine, to *convince* the gainsayers." And again, *John* 8 : 46 : "Which of you *convinceth* me of sin?" So that the direction, "tell him his fault," means *convince him of his wrong.* And this is to be done by laying the wrong and the way you can prove it—the whole wrong and whole source of proof, so before him, that he will see just what he has now to meet, and just what he must meet again, if the labor proceed further.

And if your ground is right and well sustained, you can hardly fail of producing conviction on his mind. Then add to this, plain, but kind reproof, if necessary; another idea, included in the original word. Entreat, also, as well as convince and reprove. And whether you gain your brother or not, you have done your duty so far.

Next, let the interview be a *private one*, "between thee and him alone."

Your business now is private reproof, not public reproach. Avoid, therefore, giving publicity to the matter of difference, far as you can. "A just man will not be willing to make of his brother a public example." Besides, suppose you have spoken of his fault to others; and suppose, also, that your pursuit of the "astray sheep," result in your returning with it on your rejoicing shoulder; suppose a free, friendly, faithful, private interview heal the difference; how unhappy, that you have dishonored yourself, and your brother, and the cause of religion, by publishing it!

And, again; the avoidance of publicity is not, by any means, the whole idea. The direction, "between thee and him alone," is not only in the strictest accordance with heavenly prudence, but natural policy. When we have business to do with men, we want to find them alone; and the

more especially, if it be business of a delicate or difficult character. And so it should be in this case, even though the offence itself, be quite public. "Between *thee and him alone*." Who could suggest a wiser policy than this of our Lord? Who dare presume to think of the suggestion? It is admirably natural, safe, and divine!

Then mark, with great care, the *three things* included in this FIRST step of labor. 1. Go and see your brother; 2. Convince him of his fault; and, 3. Do it in private. Do it all. Do it with a right spirit and with a right aim. Aim to "gain thy brother;" and do it in a spirit of meekness and love. Remember that much, perhaps every thing, depends on success here.

To this explanation of this part of the rule under examination, we add *one word of caution* in employing it. Do not, for a moment, entertain the false idea, that this first step of labor, was *primarily designed to prepare the way for future steps.* It is very true, that this step, having been faithfully taken; and having failed to "gain our brother," does prepare the way for subsequent proceedings; but this was not its first design. It was primarily designed to *settle the difficulty and stop all further proceeding.* Let, then, this first

great design of the step, be your design in taking it. Do not think of *future* steps with your offending brother. Be all absorbed with this one step, as though it were the only one, and the only hope. An almost uniform cause of failure here, is a want of thoroughness. Be thorough, then. Here, in all probability, you gain or lose your brother.

"But if he will not hear thee," then take the SECOND STEP.

"Take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established."

Here two questions very naturally arise in your mind. You ask, *who are* the "one or two?" And what is the *precise character* of this transaction?

Three remarks, we think, will satisfactorily answer these questions; and make the whole business of the second step of labor, plain to you and to those who may go with you.

1. The business of the first step, you recollect, was visitation, conviction, reproof, advice, entreaty; and all of it was done by you in the most retired manner possible, and with a view to gain your brother; the business of this step, is of the same nature, precisely; it includes the same parts of

service, a corresponding manner, and the same end.

As before, so now, you must still aim to gain your brother. Now, also, you must visit him. Visit him with some others. Not many. "One or two more;" that is, one or two *more* than went on the first visit; one or two in addition to yourself. Before, you visited him alone; now, you need and must have some with you. And here is the number, "one or two." Take these, and you will have all that will be necessary for every purpose—all the law allows. Take no more; and thus have an interview as near as possible, again, "between thee and him alone." If your brother's wrong is known to you and the "one or two," only; and you are all so wise as not to mention it to others; and so happy as to gain him, it will need to be known no further.

But you must visit him with one or two more, not only; but, as in the first step of labor *convince him of his wrong.* The same wrong, described in the same language. You must not change your ground, nor your language. It must be the same wrong which you defined and settled, before you commenced the labor; which you stated distinctly to him, at the time of your first visit; and which you now repeat. Your object,

now, is *conviction.* But, if you waver, you can not fasten conviction on his mind. State the wrong, then, in the same language as before; and proceed, if necessary, to "establish every word" of it. This is to be done by the aid of the "one or two," as "witnesses." And hence you are directed to take them for this very purpose. "Take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established." Every word of your complaint is to be established, by adding the testimony of *one or two more;* that is, one or two *besides* yourself. You are a witness against your brother. But, by your testimony alone, his guilt could not be established before others. His contradiction would just balance your complaint. But, if you take "one, he, with yourself, would make "two;" and if you take "two," they, with you, would make "three." And thus, every word would be established by *two,* in the first case; and by *three* in the second, just as the rule and the whole Bible require. The result of this increased and combined testimony would be, to *produce conviction* of his wrong, in the mind of your brother, if it is in your power to do it.

But, this does not finish the business of this step of labor. As in the first, you added reproof,

and advice, and entreaty, to conviction; so, now, you must have your "one or two" *fellow laborers* do the same. "And if he shall neglect to hear them," the second step of labor is at an end.

Having thus drawn out this step, in its simple process, we subjoin a remark, in the next place, showing its admirable *business character*, as well as its divine simplicity.

2. The second step of labor involves a *trial.*

This is clear from the fact, that the "one or two" are represented as "*witnesses.*" Who are witnesses? Persons, who bear testimony in a case, pending between contending parties, in order that the truth of every word of a charge preferred, may be established. If, then, this is an interview for receiving the testimony of witnesses, with a view to present conviction, how clearly it is a *trial.* But are the "one or two" *witnesses?* Mark the language: "Take one or two more." This points out the duty of the prosecuting brother. "That in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established." This shows the *object* to be gained, by taking them along with himself, as *witnesses.* Here, then, he has the *true end* of this step; and the *right way* to gain it. But to gain this end, by the one or two, as witnesses, there must be a *trial*—a pro-

ceeding which shall bring out the complaint; and the admission, or proof of its justice. Either an admission of the justice of the complaint by the offender; or its justice, established by the testimony of witnesses, make a trial of it, less or more. It is very true, that a formal and particular examination of the complaint, and of the evidence on which it rests, may not be necessary for the information of the parties, or the witnesses. The facts in the case, may all have been previously known, to each and to all of them. Still, is there not form to the interview? And what is it? Why, all having come together, the parties, and the witnesses, the offence is stated, by the injured brother. The offender pleads not guilty to the alledged charge. The "one or two" witness to the truth of "every word" of it. They know him to be guilty; and, therefore, testify to the fact; and advise him to give satisfaction. Now is there not *form* here? Indispensable form? All the form, too, and reality of a *regular trial?* Hence, the second step of labor, involves a trial.

Before leaving this point, we subjoin a word, upon the heavenly wisdom and the vast importance of this measure. A thorough trial, had in the second step of labor, and the church are saved much time, and spared much perplexity and re-

proach. Here, matters of difference among brethren in a retired manner, are carefully examined, rejected, settled, or well prepared for the church No language can sufficiently express the importance of the idea of a trial: a regular trial, substantially, not only here, but in all steps of discipline. All discipline, as we now use the term, supposes "offences." Offences suppose an offender, and one offended. These terms suppose, almost of course, the preferment of a complaint, by the offended, against the offender, before some tribunal. A complaint thus preferred, supposes witnesses to sustain it; and a decision upon the case, by said tribunal. And the whole supposes satisfaction rendered, or punishment inflicted. Now, in each of the three steps of labor, we have all these regular features of a trial. Even in the first, where the offended and the offender are "alone." The injured brother is the complainant, the witness and the judge. He states the wrong done; and not only testifies to the fact, but mentions the other sources of proof in the case, which he has. And if he fail to "gain his brother," in this interview, he goes again, with "one or two more witnesses." Here, again, the same process; the complaint, the testimony, the decision against the offender. And if all this is unavailing, the case

and the result go next to the Church, the Supreme Court of Christ, to pass, with like regularity, under her solemn review; and to receive her final sanction.

How obvious, then, the idea of a *trial*, in every step of discipline; and how vastly important, that all of us take its deep impression upon our hearts, in order to prevent haste; and ensure regularity and safety, in all our disciplinary doings.

3. The second step of labor, not only involves a trial; and makes the "one or two," witnesses; but it also represents them as *advisors* in the case.

This is clearly implied in the language, which last mentions them. "If he shall *neglect to hear them;*" that is, refuse to hearken to, and obey *their* advice; as the original word means. This view places the "one or two," in a very important and responsible light. They are seen as *advisors* in the case; and, of course, as judges, as well as witnesses. For, advice supposes judgment, and judgment, knowledge. Their knowledge of the facts in the case, qualifies them to bear testimony, not only; but to form a sound judgment, and to give appropriate advice. And to all this service in the case, they are most evidently called.

Their advice may respect two things. They *first*, advise the offender to give satisfaction, fully and promptly. "If he neglect to hear them"—refuse to heed their advice; they, *second*, advise the injured brother, to "tell it unto the church."

And their advice may be called for in *another* case. Suppose wrong has been done, and that they were witnesses of it; but a wrong of such nature as could not result in exclusion, if carried to the church; and as requires the aggrieved brother to administer simple admonition; and then act on the rule of forbearance. In such case, they should advise him to relinquish the labor; and if it be a burden, to bear it.

This whole view carries, upon its face, the idea that the "one or two" are *brethren*—members of the same church with the parties, as a probable and a general thing: although others, might be the only "witnesses." Facts are in harmony with this construction. Injuries inflicted by one member on another, are commonly known to other members of the same church. And fellow-members are generally "witnesses" and advisers, in cases of personal difficulty and discipline. And then, the rule places the "one or two" on an exact level with the injured brother and the church, as *advisers*. Mark the language.

"If he will not hear *thee*." "If he shall neglect to hear *them*." "If he neglect to hear the *church*." They, hence, are advisers in the case, as much as the prosecuting brother and the church are; and, therefore, need to be pious men; and doubtless are, generally, brethren.

Regarding the "one or two" as brethren, then; and their service, as highly important and responsible, we subjoin a few *hints* to such, calculated, if heeded, to insure success in their painful labors.

Such persons should be "full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom." Their service is highly, a spiritual one. "Ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness." They should be men who fear God supremely; and who will feel an equal sympathy for their differing brethren, and the suffering cause; men, who are, and who will be felt to be, impartial men, by the trespassing brother; otherwise, he will not, of course "hear them." They should solemnly consider, that they are called upon to testify, judge, and advise in a case of difference between brethren; and that some, even slight, defect in their temper, testimony, judgment, or advice, may turn the scales against success.

And as a successful termination, depends much

upon a right beginning, it might be well for them, in every case, and as soon as convened, to inquire whether the *first step of labor has been duly taken.* Because, if it have not, they should not act in the case. The Saviour has placed the first step of labor, before the second; and so must the injured brother, if he will walk correctly. If, upon inquiry, then, they find it has not been taken; that it has been passed over, on any account, whatever, the parties should be left "alone," to make an attempt, at an amicable adjustment of their differences. But, if they find the first step of labor, declared on the one hand, and admitted on the other, to have been duly taken, the trial may lawfully proceed.

If, now, the questions return: Who are the "one or two?" And what is the precise character of this transaction?

We answer: The second step of labor is a trial; held in a retired manner; by an injured brother, attended by his witnesses; in order to convict an offender of his fault, and gain him.

And the "one or two" are witnesses, judges, and advisers, in the same sense, substantially, that the prosecuting brother is.

And they naturally become "witnesses," also, before the Church; provided the case is carried

there. The knowledge they have gained from the trial, in addition to what they before possessed, highly qualifies them to bear an intelligent and hearty testimony, before the Church, to the guilt and desert of the offender; and, also, to the faithfulness of the injured member, in laboring to gain his brother. And to this service they would, of necessity, be called, upon the presentation of the case to that tribunal, by the prosecuting brother. Without their presence, and their testimony, he could not be sustained, either in his charge of wrong, or declaration of faithfulness in attempting to correct it.

"And if he shall neglect to hear them," take the THIRD and LAST STEP of labor. "Tell it unto the Church."

This is made the duty, the last duty, of the prosecuting brother in the case. "Tell it unto the Church." Now, mark the *proper manner*. Address the Moderator. Say to him, "I have a matter of personal difficulty to lay before the Church." Here stop. Do not state what it is. Call no names. If he understand his duty, he will ask *six questions*, principally to you; thus preparing the way for its proper admission.

1. Have you taken the first step of labor? You answer, "I have."

2. Have you taken the second step? "I have."

3. Did you, in this last step, have "one or two" with you, as "witnesses" and advisers; and are they present? "I had, and they are here. Brother B. and Mr. S."

4. Brother B. and Mr. S., are all these things so? "They are."

5. Have you notified the offending brother, that you should tell your grievance unto the Church to-day? "I have, and he is present."

6. Have you the complaint with the testimony of the witnesses, in writing. "I have."

These precautionary steps being thus taken, the Clerk reads the complaint, and the testimony of the witnesses. And the Moderator calls on brother B. and Mr. S. for their testimony, that this same complaint was preferred and examined, in a second step of labor; and that it was fully sustained, according to this paper. They testify to this effect. And thus in the mouth of witnesses, again, every word of the complaint is established.

The case thus before the Church, the Moderator calls on the offender for *satisfaction;* or to show cause why he does not render it. His reply satisfies no one; except it be of his guilt. The brethren, next, generally expostulate with him. But "he neglects to hear the Church."

His exclusion, by *unanimous vote*, next follows; and that, with the reasons of it, is accurately entered upon her blushing records. He is now to be regarded "as an heathen man and a publican;" that is, as the worst of men, in the estimation of a Jew. He should be furnished with a letter, containing the fact of his exclusion, with the reasons of it.

Or, suppose, the case, (and such a case there might be,) that some of the members of the Church are not *entirely satisfied* to exclude now. Suppose they wish a review of the case. This may be had.

Or, suppose again, that the Church are *seriously divided* in opinion, respecting the case. The importance of unanimity, would suggest moderation; and, as the next best measure, an invitation to some two, or three, or more, able and impartial ministers and brethen to attend the next church meeting, as *counsellors*, and *sit with the Church;* and hear the case; and aid to an amicable and unanimous decision. A course, we are frank to say, which we prefer, decidedly, before ordinary councils.

For, be it remembered, the sole power of decision upon all cases of Discipline, is in the Church. This is the divine constitution. Touching the ultimate reference of all matters, the direction is

specific and final. "Tell it unto the church; but if he shall neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and a publican." This makes the *Church* the only proper judicatory, before which matters of difficulty can be brought; and the only proper court, wielding the power of ultimate decision.

In strict accordance with this view of the Saviour, is the direction of the Apostle to the Corinthian believers. He writes them as a Church; and as a Church, he directs them, "when gathered together to deliver their incestuous member unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh; to put away that wicked person."—1 *Cor.* 5. In his second letter to this same Church, touching this same case, he expresses his judgment, that the punishment of the excluded member, inflicted by the majority, had been "sufficient," and directs them to "forgive him and confirm their love to him;" that is, restore him. 2 *Cor.* 2. So, in writing the Thessalonian Church, he recognises her power and her duty, in the discipline of "disorderly walkers."—2 *Thess.* 3. Hence, the exclusion and the restoration of persons, lie with the Church, and of course, all the processes connected with them.

Still, there may be cases, in which the Church may need assistance. And when, on any account,

she may be too weak to bring forth judgment, it may be as highly advisable, as it is admissable, for her to invite two or three or more *able and impartial ministers or brethren, to sit with her, hear and advise.* Then, no decision will, or ever can be spoken of, but that of the Church. These men do not *vote;* they *only advise the Church how to vote.* They aid her; but do not supersede her. They make her, and leave her, *all and in all,* just as her Maker and Master did.

In connection with this examination of personal offences, and the proper rule of treating them, it will be proper to consider that *particular case* of personal offence mentioned in the 6th chapter of 1 Corinthians, with the *rule* laid down for its treatment; and its admirable accordance, in principle, with the rule in the 18th chapter of Matthew, which we have just been considering.

"Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life? If, then, ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge, who are least esteemed in the church. I speak to

your shame! Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? No! not one, that shall be able to judge between his brethren! But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. Now, therefore, there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? Nay, ye do wrong and defraud, and that your brethren.

On the face of this paragraph, we may see *five things:*

1. That the difficulty among the Corinthian brethren was of a *pecuniary* character; about property; "things that pertain to this life."

2. That they had recourse to the *law* to settle their matters of difference; and that before heathen judges, under pretence that their brethren were incompetent to judge. "But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers; before the unjust and not before the saints."

3. That the holy Apostle *spurns this idea*, and argues their competence from the fact, that they shall "judge the world and angels." "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye

not that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? I speak to your shame! Is it so, that there is not a *wise man* among you? No! not one that shall be *able* to judge between his brethren?"

4. That he established a *rule*, which provides for the happy adjustment of all "matters" of pecuniary difference.

It is this: *Refer your matters of difference to your brethren.* Mark his language. "If, then, ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, *set them to judge which are least esteemed in the church.*" That is, not those who are justly held in low estimation, in view of their intellectual and moral worth; but, brethren, who are now, in fact, as the original word simply means, *undervalued, neglected, and set at naught, by you,* notwithstanding they are "wise men"—men, "able to judge between their brethren." The rule, then, is, *leave all matters of pecuniary difference to wise and able brethren, instead of going to law.*

5. We see, also, that there is an *admirable accordance*, between the principle, laid down here by Paul; and that laid down by the Saviour in the 18th chapter of Matthew, for the settlement of personal difficulties.

We have defined personal offences to be injuries of a brother's person, reputation, or property.

Here we have a case of the latter kind. The injury of a brother's property. Now, suppose a brother, thus injured, take the rule in the 18th chapter of Matthew for his guide. He first, makes a fair attempt to settle the matter "between himself and his brother alone." And this by the by, would be a natural way, in the case, whether a member of a church or not, if he meant to do right and avoid difficulty. But, not succeeding, instead of sueing him at the law, he "takes one or two more;" "sets wise men;"—"able to judge between their brethren," and, if possible, to testify, also; *precisely* as the Saviour and Paul have directed. They hear the charge. They witness to its truth; or hear it witnessed to. They judge the alledged offender guilty. They advise him to make reparation. He does so, and the matter is amicably settled. Or, suppose he refuse to give satisfaction. They advise the injured brother to lay the case before the Church. He does so, and the matter eventuates in the offender's exclusion; and in his exposure to prosecution, as another man.

Who now, but sees the Saviour, and his servant Paul, agreeing in their principles of discipline? And who, but must see, that the rule laid down by the Saviour, and thus sustained by the apostle, must operate most efficiently, and therefore prop-

erly in every case of personal offence, where there is proof?

But, we suppose again, while on the subject of sueing at the law. Suppose a case of pecuniary injury, in which it is *impracticable for the law for personal offences to operate.* For example, a brother is on the point of removal; or is removing; is not only in debt, but is becoming an absconding debtor; or, is just putting his property out of his hands: then, and in that case, the question is, *What is it right to do?* Well, the Gospel allows no sueing at the law; and let us remember, if we do sue, in any possible case, its operation should not be inconsistent with the public mind, the honor of the cause, the real good of the parties, and the strictest principles of justice and benevolence. We "speak this, not of commandment."

We are now brought to consider the *exception*, which we promised to notice. It is this; that the rule in the 18th of Matthew is not necessary to be observed in those cases of personal offence which have been *quite publicly committed.*

On this exception, and the rule itself, we make two remarks.

1. We believe the rule in the 18th of Matthew is primarily and peculiarly applicable to all those cases of personal offence, which are but a *little*

known when first committed. Because, the majority of personal offences, are of this character; and the right employment of this rule, was designed, and is calculated, to heal budding difficulties *in private;* and avoid painful exposures of our erring brethren.

2. We also believe, that this rule is applicable to, and therefore, should be employed in, every case of personal offence, *however publicly committed and generally known.*

This opinion is founded upon the five following reasons:

1. The rule is plain, absolute, and *without exception*, as laid down by the master. "If thy brother trespass against thee; go and tell him his fault; take one or two more; tell it unto the church." This is the rule for the case; the only rule; a rule without the exception in question. *Secrecy* does not qualify the transgression; but the *measure* for correcting it.

2. The rule cannot operate at all, beyond the first step, unless the offence be *public;* or at least, *known to some extent.* It must be known to witnesses, or there can be no trial; and there must be a trial, "that every word may be established in the mouth of two or three witnesses."

Now, if *some degree* of publicity is the life of the rule, who will undertake to say that *much* destroys it.

3. The rule operates most efficiently in every case of personal offence, *however public*, and, on that account, aggravated it may be. The chief difference, in the two supposed cases, is, the one offence is more generally known, than the other; and, therefore, the greater for this reason; and consequently, the greater satisfaction is required. Now let the rule operate. The prosecuting brother requires, in the nature of the case, *a satisfaction ample as the injury to himself and the cause.* He is satisfied, when the public, as well as the personal reproach is wiped away. His demand is precisely what, that of the church and the public, is. Taking this rule, and going upon the principle, that all who have been witnesses of the wrong, must also be witnesses of the reparation, every man will, at last, be satisfied with the full confession, or the fearful excommunication of the offender.

4. The faithful employment of this rule ensures *universal approbation*, as well as absolute success, in all cases of personal offence, however public. You employ this rule, and none will presume to fault you. You neglect it, and some will censure you. The one course is plain, the other, doubtful.

5. This rule will operate well, even in a *mixed case.* We mean, when the same "trespass" is

both against a brother and the church. For example, should one brother slander another in church meeting. This would be a violation of the *order* of the church, and an *abuse* of the brother. Now, suppose the offender should be asked by the brother, or the church, either, to make satisfaction; and should refuse to do so. Of course, nothing could be done, at that time. But every one knows, that something must be done. He must be waited upon in some way. Now for the rule of procedure. Suppose you appoint a committee to wait upon him and report. This may answer. It may bring him to make satisfaction, both to the church and the injured brother, at the next church meeting. But, it is a rule of your own invention. And what is it better than the rule of Christ?

Now, see that operate, in this same case. The injured brother estimates the *whole offence.* He feels the *slander* personally; and the *disorder*, in common with others. He goes to his brother when he is cool, and "alone;" tells him his fault; tries to convince him of his wrongs of disorder and slander. Does not succeed. "Takes one or two more," (of course, acquainted with the case,) to expostulate with him. Fails again. Next, it comes to the church, where it begun. The church do not ask proof of the offence; they

witnessed it. They ask, has every thing been done to gain him? Now what committee could make a better report, than the injured brother and his "one or two" fellow laborers? Who does not see that while he *has done his own duty*, in correcting a personal injury; he has also served the church, in bringing an incorrigible public offender to her bar for punishment? And all in a most natural, inoffensive, and efficient way—his Lord's own appointed way.

We, therefore, cannot see why the rule, in question, should not be employed in every case of personal offence, *however public;* although primarily and peculiarly applicable to cases less known.

CHAPTER V.

Fourth Class of Offences; Public.

To the fourth class of offences, belong *public* ones. A public offence is one which equally injures all the members of the church; and for which all require an equal satisfaction.

It may not be improper, in this place, to notice

a distinction, we have before made; and which should be clearly seen, between *public personal* offences, and *public* offences, properly so called.

While, in a case of simple public offence, all the members are equally injured; the same is not true, in case of a personal offence, however publicly, it may have been committed. All may require satisfaction, in the latter case; but not as much as the injured brother.

Two examples will illustrate the distinction. Suppose a brother be guilty of *profane swearing publicly*. This would be a *public* offence, and would equally injure all the members. But suppose again, the same individual be guilty of *circulating false reports* against a member. This would be a public personal offence, injuring an individual more than all the members besides. In the former case, the case of profanity, he would not consider himself called upon, more than the other members were, to correct the offender. But in the latter case he would. The public offence, would arouse the Church; the personal one, the individual. Now all this is natural. So it is in State as well as Church. A breach of the public peace would be prosecuted in the name of the people. In a case of personal injury, the injured individual seeks redress in his own name and way.

Having thus defined public offences, we proceed to consider *some cases*, mentioned in the Apostolic Epistles, with the methods of treatment required. And, as what is very strongly marked, we notice, in the first place, "*heresy*."

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ; but their own belly, and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."—*Rom.* 16. "There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them. And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."—2 *Pet.* 2. "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing; but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth; from such withdraw thyself."—1 *Tim.* 6. "A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject; knowing that he that is such, is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of him-

self."—*Tit.* 3. "And of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."—*Acts.* 20. "Of whom is Hymeneus and Phyletus; who, concerning the truth, have erred, saying, the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some."—2 *Tim.* 2.

What, now, is the precise character of the offence, mentioned in these passages? It is *heresy.* By which is meant, however, something more, than the term is generally supposed to mean. "An heretic," in the scriptural sense of the word, was a man *unsound in doctrine, and the leader of a faction, or head of a new sect.* Hence, such men are said to be "subverted;" that is, overturned, as to their professed faith in the gospel. And "not to consent to the doctrine which is according to godliness;" to "bring in damnable heresies;" to "cause divisions contrary to the doctrine learned; and by good words and fair speeches to deceive the hearts of the simple;" and "to draw away disciples after them."

The *grand characteristics* of an "heretic" are strictly four: unsoundness of sentiment, selfishness of aim, flattering pretensions, and successful generalship. The case, then is a plain, and not an uncommon one. For example, a brother becomes a Mormon, in sentiment. Of course he will preach

his peculiar views; and, almost of course, if a man of ambition, tact, and influence, will succeed in seducing the artless and unsuspecting; and drawing them away with him. Such, now, is a case of *heresy*.

The case is a plain one, and the *treatment* required and to be employed, is equally plain. 1. "*Mark them which cause divisions. Mark* them! that is, eye their movements with waking jealousy and keenest vigilance. 2. Administer "*the first and second admonition;*" that is, plainly and with repetition, point out their errors; and faithfully exhort them to abandon them. 3. And finally, if they do not repent of the pernicious influence of their new sentiments and measures, *promptly exclude* them; as three directions in the case require. "*From such withdraw thyself.*" "*Avoid them.*" "*Reject a man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition.*"

In the 5th chapter of 1 Corinthians, we have grouped together a number of *public offences*. "But now I have written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard; or an extortioner; with such a one; no, not to eat."

Let us briefly examine these cases:

First, "*fornication.*" That particular case of

fornication, which is the principle subject of this chapter, was regarded by the holy apostle, as a case of incest, most notorious and aggravating; and which demanded immediate exclusion. It, therefore, falls under the head of *insufferable offences;* the last class of offences to be considered. But cases of *moral impurity*, far less aggravating, may occur; and may justly require moderation and labor, on the part of the church. Such are, therefore, properly *public offences.*

Immediately associated with this case, is *covetousness.* "If any man that is called a brother be a fornicator or *covetous.*" That is, a covetous person; one who, as the original word means, has an inordinate craving for gain; a "greediness for filthy lucre;" that is, an eagerness for dishonorable gain. And who, for the sake of gain, not only withholds; but defrauds, and perhaps, even steals. Covetousness is a sin of so common and so flagrant a character as to require to be very distinctly marked. It is a disease, (might we so liken it,) when far advanced and deeply seated, which is attended with three very plain symptoms.

1. By a *groaning or grumbling about poverty*, amidst real and unconcealable wealth. The tongue, in this case, bears the marks of a very reddish falsity.

2. By an *entire absence of all warmth and sympathy* for the cause of religion in the region of the heart. This manifests itself by shiverings, and shuttings and lockings up of "the bowels of compassion;" and by a receding of the life-current, from the extremities, the moment you begin to take the hand, and feel for the pulsations of interest for the cause.

3. And by a *uniform muttering of complaints*, as well as excuses. This is one of its most prominent features.

Covetous men are not content with making refusals; they must utter *complaints*. They have a fault-finding spirit. Whatever the object, they must raise some objection. We have never known such men do much good, for two reasons: They are so occupied with their money, they have not the time; and so in love with it, they have not the disposition. A man who is liberal with his money, is liberal with every thing else. These men are liberal with nothing, except complaints. If so, they must do hurt, rather than good, under a Christian profession. And if so, their guilt and their desert are alike obvious. The apostle often mentions this sin, and that, in connexions, showing its fearful enormity. "Be not not decived; neither fornicators, nor theives, nor *covetous*, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extor-

tioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor *covetous man who is an idolater*, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." Now, if the sin of covetousness is so utterly inconsistent with an admission into Heaven, is it not, also, plainly inconsistent with a standing in the Church? Most certainly it is. And hence its classification with fornication, and other like sins, is not only to show its marked moral deformity, but positive desert of severest punishment. Hence covetousness is a *public offence*, easily detected; and deserves and demands the notice of the Church; and prompt exclusion, if persisted in.

While on covetousness, we subjoin a word, upon the *true principle* of raising money, for the defrayment of Church expenses, as these home "gatherings," (strange to tell!) are among the occasions, for the development of this foul plague-spot of Zion. *Voluntary donations*, as in primitive and even olden times, should be made by each member, *according to his pecuniary ability*, for this purpose. (See *Lev.* 5; 7. 14; 21. *Ezra* 2; 69. *Neh.* 5; 8. *Acts* 2; 44–45. 4; 32–37. 11; 29. 1 *Cor.* 16; 2. 2 *Cor.* 8; 11–14. 9; 5–7.) And when a member, in the judgment of the Church, does not do *his part*, he should be in-

structed in his duty, if ignorant; and encouraged to do his part fully; and if he refuse, he should be considered as *covetous*, and his covetousness as a *public offence*, and disciplinable.

Next, *railing*. "If any man that is called a brother, be a *railer*." That is, a loud, insulting reviler; one who uses opprobious and abusive language in speaking of his fellow-men; one, from whose bitter lips is constantly rushing a torrent of censorious remark.

Next, *drunkenness*. "If any man that is called a brother, be a *drunkard*." That is, not one who may have been, accidentally though imprudently, overtaken by intoxication; and who may thus have committed a public offence; but strictly one who is "known, and read," and called, "of all men," a drunkard; one who *habitually* uses intoxicating drinks, so as to disguise himself less or more.

Next, *extortion*. "If any man that is called a brother, be an *extortioner*." This offence might seem to be nearly allied to covetousness; and so it is. Covetousness is the root; this, the fruit. One describes the feelings of the heart; the other, the acts of the life. Covetousness eagerly pants for gain; extortion, ravenously seizes it. The original term, means to be rapacious, and is applied to beasts of prey. Applied to men, it means

those, who, like beasts of prey, will take all they can get; and that with just as little principle. It means those who oppress for gain; who not only dare, but delight, to take more than their due; who "defraud, and that their brethren." A remarkable case of the entire destitution, both of the integrity and the benevolence of the gospel.

It may be observed, in this place, and before noticing the rule here laid down for the treatment of these several offences; that although usually public offences, two of them, namely, *railing* and *extortion*, becomes *personal* when committed against a member in the same church with the offender. Then, and in that case, the rule for personal offences, should operate. The injured brother, instead of the Church, should take the laboring oar. But, when these offences are committed against persons out of the church, and in the society, we have no law, requiring such injured individual to correct our erring brother. The offence is a public one; and for his correction the Church is held responsible; and she must, by prompt action, show all whom it may concern, that she both understands her duty, and is ready to do it.

And the *rule* is before her. The same rule is laid down as equally applicable to each of the five public offences, here mentioned. "But now I

have written unto you, if any man that is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, *not to keep company with such an one; no, not to eat.*"

This rule, proceeding upon the principle that the offender is irreclaimable; and therefore, necessarily and promptly removed from the church; includes and enjoins *two things*, designed to regulate our conduct toward excluded persons, who are high offenders; and to add merited weight to the excinding blow.

1. *A strict avoidance of free and familiar intercourse.* "I have written unto you not to keep company with such an one." There should be friendly feeling towards such guilty and unhappy individual; but, after exclusion, he should be made to feel the amazing weight of the solemn sentence by corresponding conduct, on the part of *every* member of the Church.* To each and

* And we add, with *emphasis;* the solemn sentence should also be enforced, by a corresponding conduct, on the part of *every* member of *every* church. Excluded persons often seek an asylum in some neighboring sister church. And often they are kindly noticed; and thus encouraged to hope that "if they cannot live *there*, they can *here*." Now, such conduct in a sister church, or in her pastor, or any of her members, is flagrant *injustice* towards all concerned. It is a setting aside of the most solemn decision and act of Christ's own court. It is an instance of most palpable *disrespect* of a sister and an equal. It is a doing, in this respect, as we would not be done by. Moreover, it is such a nourishing and

to all, he is to be as alien, as "an heathen man and a publican" to a Jew. 2. *A refusal to participate with him at social meals.* That is, to "dine or take tea" with him, as we should express it; "No, not to eat." This cannot mean eating at the *Lord's table*, because, in that case, the apostle would have said, "not keep company," *much less*, partake with him at the Lord's table. This would have been an ascending from the less to the greater; whereas he evidently descends from the greater to the less. "Not keep company; no, not to eat." That is not *even* to eat. Nor can this signify the avoidance of *common family meals*, which might be quite as impossible, in point of fact, as inconsistent with certain scriptural relations and duties. But it may mean, and evidently does mean a refusal of all such social interchanges; such visitings and receiving visits; and such groupings around the social board as express a familiarity with, and a fellowship for,

cherishing of the guilty one, as "a brother beloved," as heals, at once and slightly, the wound of excision, which ought to be left, ulcerating and burning, for his purification. Instead of this course, if the excluded person have been wronged, (which may be the case; but which we should be slow to believe,) our sister church should be approached with respect, and confidence, and freedom; and desired to explain; and, perhaps, review the case with the aid of counsellors. A right church, rightly approached, would cheerfully do what was right in the premises.

the party, our act of disfellowship to the contrary, notwithstanding.

The substance of the rule, then, as implied and expressed, is, *exclude such and shun them*, being offenders of high *degree.*

We have another and rather singular case of public offence, in the 3d chapter of Paul's 2d letter to the Thessalonians:

"Now we command you, brethren in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that *walketh disorderly;* for we hear that there are some which *walk among you disorderly, working not at all: but are busy-bodies.* Now them that are such, we command that with quietness they work and eat their own bread; and if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy; but admonish him as a brother."

The whole offence seems to be, *indolence and meddling with the affairs of others.* The term "disorderly," originally, was spoken of soldiers who desert their ranks; and means, to be neglectful of one's own duties; to abandon recklessly one's own proper place and labor; in the language of the text, to "work not at all;" to live on others. It describes a set of men who were

drones in God's hive; consuming the common stock; who were more willing to eat than earn their bread. And it may now forcibly apply to men who are *slack in domestic duties*—the duties of home; who "provide not for their own house."

The first part of the offence, then, is *indolence.* The other term, *busy-bodies*, which indicates the other, counter and corresponding part of it, as employed in the Scriptures, was applied to a set of individuals, who were *uselessly employed;* and *particularly officious* in other men's matters; who were as busy in the concerns of others, as they ought to have been in their own; like flies, every where present, annoying and hateful; and who, of course, were exceedingly obtrusive and unamiable characters.

Now for the rule of treatment.

1. "*Note that man.*" That is, point him out—expose him to all. Let him know that he is an object of the godly jealousy of the Church. "Exhort him, by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness he work and eat his own bread," and thus mind his own business. And if he do not reform:

2 "*Withdraw yourselves from him.*" That is, withdraw the hand of fellowship from him—exclude him. "Now, we command you, brethren, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother

that walketh disorderly; for we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all; but are busy-bodies."

3. "*Have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.*" That is, be not familiar; treat such, coolly. Thus shame them; put them to the blush, for this is the object; that they may be ashamed; that is, of their conduct, and so reform.

4. "*Yet, count him not as an enemy; but admonish him as a brother.*" Count him not as an enemy." Do not let your dislike ripen into enmity. But admonish him as a brother. He may be a Christian, though so unlovely in character; and so undesirable in company. Therefore admonish him; point out his faults, as you may occasionally fall in with him; explain the reasons of your distance; and let him know, that, unless he reforms he must expect to be as unhappy in your presence, as you are in his.

In addition to these instances of public offence, contained in the Epistles, we include and mention several others, under the head of *Covenant-breaking.*

The Church Covenant contains a rich and beautiful summary of Christian duties; and contemplates the formation of every member to the highest excellence and loveliness of character. Every

member, upon joining the Church, and signing this instrument, pledges himself to the performance of something like the following duties: 1. To control his temper; not to cherish revengeful anger. 2. To watch his conversation; avoiding jesting, evil speaking, and profanity. 3. To take heed to his company; not to associate with tavern-haunters, and the like men. 4. To study a peaceful, quiet, orderly deportment, at home and abroad, in the church and in the family. 5. To be just in all his pecuniary transactions with his fellow-men. 6. To be useful; to do good to all men. 7. To "remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy." 8. To maintain family worship. 9. To watch over his fellow-members for good. And, 10. To attend the meetings of the Church, for preaching, prayer, observance of the ordinances, and business.

Now, a failure to redeem all or any of these pledges, may be called, *Covenant-breaking;* and should be corrected as a *public offence*, except the failure injure some fellow member, in which case it would be a personal one.

We can scarcely forbear, in this place, it is so important to be plain upon this subject, to specify, quite distinctly, a *few cases* of Covenant-breaking and public offence; and especially, as they are so frequently occurring, and so commonly neglected.

1. *Simple neglect of the duties, arising from church relation.*

For example, a brother, habitually or frequently neglects the Sabbath worship, the stated and special meetings of the Church; and appears to be, and is, indifferent to the interests of the cause. He has broken his covenant, and is guilty of a *public offence.*

2. *Offence with the Church, and non-submission to majority.*

For example, a brother takes offence with the Church, for some of her acts; leaves his seat at the Lord's table, and on the Sabbath; declares non-fellowship and non-submission; and thus trifles with the feelings of the members, and with his own standing. He also, has violated his covenant obligations in several particulars; and is guilty of a *public offence*, which is attended with some circumstances of high aggravation.

Some bring into the Church, from the very nursery, their furious tempers and habits of insubordination. They used to have their own way; they mean to have it still. They are ardent, ambitious, self-willed, and impatient of restraints and failures. And when they chance to be in the minority, they rebel, and factiously disturb the peace of the church or leave it. Such men are often great troublers of Israel. They are wrong,

altogether wrong; their offence public, and severely disciplinable; *provided always*, that the Church has been open, deliberate, and fair, in canvassing and deciding the disputed question. In such case, each member has freely and fully expressed his views, and voted as he pleased. He can ask no more. He must submit, or suffer exclusion.

3. *Leaving our place at the table of the Lord, because some member has injured us.*

For example, a brother receives a real injury from another member, and feels so keenly tried, that he knows not how to commune with him; and so leaves his place, during the time of the celebration of the Lord's Supper. He has committed a two-fold offence; a *public* offence against the Church, by neglecting the ordinance which he covenanted to observe, without any such exception as he now makes; and a *personal* one against the brother implicated, by such a method of exposure. We say exposure, because a faithful Pastor and Church will inquire after the reason of neglect. And they are entitled to the true reason. This given, and behold! the untimely exposure of the erring brother! Now, there was a right way to expose him, had he refused to give satisfaction in private interviews. The statute points it out; but alas! he has presumed to take

this way to do it. Before the hour of communion, he was innocent; now, he is guilty of a two-fold offence, and exposed to a two-fold punishment. He must now, according to strict justice, confess to the Church and acknowledge to the brother; or suffer exclusion.

And we may further remark, this brother's mistake is a common one; one fearfully common. A mistake, which arises from a prevailing misapprehension of the *design* of the ordinance. It is supposed to be intended to express, primarily Christian union and fellowship; whereas, this is only incidental. The primary design was to "*remember*" *Christ;* and not each other. The eye and heart of each communicant, are on the crucified *one;* and not on his fellow. And suppose he love his Lord so intensely; and remember Him with such absorbing interest, as to forget all around him; what harm? The existence of union and fellowship, we do not deny; but they are not direct; they are circuitous and consequential. They are like the union and fellowship of distant members, through the medium of the body. The sacred stream runs, like the life-blood, from one extremity to the other; from member to member; but it is through the medium of the heart. So that, if we meet at all, and taste the sweets of Christian union, and Divine fellowship,

at the table of the Lord, it is in Christ. And this, at best, is a *consequence* resulting from the primary design.

Be it remembered, therefore, by all, that, if we so magnify Christian union and communion with one another, as to eclipse communion with Christ; and so much remember our brother's sins, as to forget our Saviour's sufferings, we have fulfilled one law of our own; but broken two, of Christ's. He has given two distinct laws, for the two distinct cases. His law of Commemoration, and his law of Discipline. His law of Commemoration is; "This do ye, as often as ye do it, in remembrance of ME." His law of Discipline: "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church." So that, if a brother refuse to fill his place at the table of the Lord, because another has injured him, he has broken his covenant in several particulars; and is guilty of a *public* offence, as well as a *personal* one.

4. *Reckless failures to meet contracts.*

We mean, particularly, the common, careless failures of some members, to pay their current debts, according to engagement. For example, a brother is in the habit of contracting debts, with

the promise of paying them promptly at a specified time; but, in fact, without the prospect of doing so. Or, to vary the case, if the time of payment is not specified, the debt is contracted with the common business understanding, that it shall be seasonably met, when he knows of no way he can do it. Or, to vary the case again, the debt is contracted, the time of payment either expressed or understood; and the means of payment are in the hands of the debtor; but a failure takes place, because he is as *slack* as he ought to be punctual.

Now, all these cases, and all similar cases of recklessness in business, which involves the interests of others, savor of *dishonesty;* and are so construed by the world. Such acts are personal offences, when committed by a brother in dealing with a fellow member; and *public*, when against another person, being a palpable violation of his covenant, in which he pledged himself to be "*just* in all his pecuniary transactions with his fellowmen."

5. *Desecration of the Lord's Day.*

There are multitudes of church members, on whom Sabbath restraints sit very lightly. They not only fail to come up to the standard of its requirements; but fail, also, to keep within the range of its prohibitions. Some engage in those

kinds of business which compel them to work on this holy day of the Lord, less or more. Others travel or visit on this day; and, it would seem, deliberately make their arrangements to do so.

Such and similar instances of the desecration of this hallowed fraction of time, it should be well understood and deeply felt by every Christian, are utterly inconsistent with the high spiritual ends of the institution; and are, alike, an infraction of the Ten Commandments, the Gospel of Christ, and the Covenant of the Church; and, therefore, are *public* offences.

6. *The greatly prevalent and hateful sin of backbiting;* nearly allied to common *gossiping* and *tattling.*

Backbiting might seem to be near of kin to "railing," mentioned by the apostle in 1 Cor. 5: and already noticed. And so it is. Railing and backbiting both consist in evil speaking; and the chief difference between them, lies in the manner of it. Railing is the loud, open, angry species of evil speaking; backbiting, the low, secret, mischievous, mean sort of the same kind of business; as the structure and imagery of the term, plainly indicate. The word, *backbiting*, means the act of secretly faulting one to another. Figuratively and etymologically taken, the last part of it, *biting*, indicates the act, as malicious in its origin, and pain-

ful in effect; and the other and qualifying part of it, *back*, indicates meanness of motive and measure; a meanness and maliciousness that can inflict a stinging, secret injury, without cause. The maliciousness and the meanness of this sin, have scarcely a parallel in the gloomy catalogue of sins; and, certainly, have no alliance with common decency; much less, "pure and undefiled religion!" If a church member, then, become a *backbiter*, he should be regarded as guilty of an offence both aggravating and intolerable; a *public* offence, being a violation of his covenant, in which he pledged himself to "watch his conversation, *avoiding evil speaking*, as well as jesting and profanity."

It is an important rule, in estimating the *degrees* of offences, and the just measure of punishment due each; to distinguish, carefully, between faults which are the consequence of *sudden temptation;* and those which are the result of *premeditation and habit.* For example, a brother, overtaken by intoxication for the first time, accidentally or carelessly, presents a great contrast to one, whose inclination and habit render it quite certain, that he will overdrink, if exposed. The sin of Peter in once denying his Lord, was small in comparison with that of Solomon, who was habitually licentious and idolatrous.

On this point we have specific instruction. "Of some have compassion, *making a difference*, and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh."—*Jude* 22–23.

The various species of public offences thus examined, we come next, to consider, *the general rule of treatment.*

This rule is found in 1 Tim. 5 : 20. "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear."

That is, "them that sin" *before all*, "rebuke before all." Them that sin publicly, rebuke publicly. A public offence requires a public punishment; at least, a public correction. The punishment of public offences, in the church, like the punishment of all other offences, should be according to the varying degrees of criminality. This rule includes two of the *lesser degrees* of punishment, which gives it a universal applicability to public offences; an applicability to the smaller offences, by its milder punishment; and to the greater ones, by paving the way for the severest penalties.

The term, "rebuke," signifies, 1. To *point out* plainly and convincingly, to them that sin publicly, *their offence in the presence of the Church.* And, 2. To *reprove* them, also, for it, in the same *public manner.*

This rule, then, contains the two ideas of *public statement* and *public reproof.* That the employment of this rule was designed as a public punishment, is plain from its expressed object. "*That others also may fear;* that is, that the rest of the members, witnessing the true manner of correcting public offences, *may fear* a similar, public and mortifying *rebuke*, for some public offence which they might commit; and so be admonished to watchfulness and prayer.

See Paul acting, in a certain case according to the letter and in the spirit of his own inspired rule; that a public offence might be publicly rebuked; and that its object might be secured. His brother Peter, on a certain occasion, had "not walked uprightly"—had been guilty of "dissimulation, and carrying others away with it." Paul "withstood him to the face, *before them all*, because he was to be blamed."—*Gal.* 2. "Them that sin, rebuke before all, that others also may fear."

It should be particularly noticed, that this explanation of this rule for the treatment of public offences, *perfectly corresponds* with the import of those other directions, which we have noticed, in connection with the public offences, found in the Apostolic Epistles.

In the case of "*heretics*," it will be recollected

that the Church, as a body, were to "mark them;" to administer "the first and second admonition," and then, "reject them." Here was a "rebuke before all;" a public statement and public reproof which led on to exclusion. A public punishment, for a public offence.

Again: in the case of "*fornicators, covetous members, railers, drunkards, and extortioners,*" the Church were required openly to shun their "company;" and to avoid all social interchanges with them. Such conduct in the Church towards any of her members, would require a full, open statement of the reasons on which it was based. But what would such statement be, short of a "rebuke before all?"

In the case, also, of "*disorderly walkers,*" the same avoidance of familiarity is strictly enjoined, together with the duty of solemn and direct "admonition." A "rebuke before all."

All these directions, then, accompanying the particular but varying cases to which they are appended, so well agree in import with the rule under consideration; and then, this rule is so striking in its application to all cases of Covenant-breaking, that it may well be considered as the great *general rule* for the correction of public offences. This rule contains all that the majority of public offences require for their correction.

That smaller portion of public offences, which are too great for this rule to fully punish, may be approached by this rule; and then finished with the particular directions, appended to the particular cases.

But as this rule cannot be employed, if the delinquent member is *absent*, something like the following, would, in general, be the proper course of procedure. The Church should cite him by the clerk, or, what is better, by an individual, volunteering his services, to attend the next church-meeting, and give satisfaction for his offence. The offence, if fully known, and time of meeting, should be distinctly stated to him. If he appear, the Minister, as the organ of the Church, having ascertained, or after ascertaining the precise amount of his wrong, should point it out to him, "before all;" and then admonish him, according as age and circumstances require. If he do not render satisfaction, he should be requested favorably to entertain the views the Church have of his offence and his duty; and to attend the next church meeting. If he appear and do not show penitence for his wrong, "the admonition" should be repeated; and if its repetition is alike unavailing, he should be promptly excluded.

And provided a public offender refuse to come before the Church, the work of examination and

admonition, should be conducted by some member or members who may volunteer for the purpose; and who may possess, perhaps, some qualification which would encourage the hope of their success in the case; upon whose report, if unfavorable, exclusion should take place.

Before leaving the subject of public offences we want to make two remarks.

The first, upon *public confessions*. Some difference of opinion seems to have obtained respecting the *degree* of publicity which it is proper to give to confessions. But where is there room for but one opinion? Do not common sense and common justice demand that the reparation should be as *large* as the injury? Certainly. And so it most evidently ought to be. First, the repentance should be as deep, as the wound inflicted. Then, the confession *public*, as the fault was committed; or rather public, in a sense corresponding with its notoriety. All those persons who have heard of the offence, should hear the confession, or hear of it, as satisfactory. Be they one-half of the members of the Church or all of them: be they a part of the Church and congregation, or all of them Honest, full confessions are a salve, exceedingly healing to the wounds unto which they are applied. The fact, that such confessions *touch the spot*, is an unanswerable argument in their favor.

Indeed, they more than satisfy even the world. The man who has the integrity, the humility, and the manliness, to confess his wrong; and make full reparation, rises in the esteem of all, as he ought to do; and becomes the more beloved for his full, honest-hearted confession, in spite of the sin and the shame that produced it.

Example in the case of Mr. Henry Van Antwerp. He was overtaken by *intoxication* on a public occasion; but was no sooner sober, than he was sorry; and no sooner had the opportunity, in a corresponding public manner, to confess his sin, than he did it. His return was voluntary, hearty, and more than satisfactory. He wept, and the assembly all wept with him. And we all loved him the more, for this new evidence we had that he was a good man, though fallible.

If an offender shrink from confessing, so as to satisfy all concerned, it shows, in the general, that he is not right. A real penitent will be likely to confess too much, rather than too little. His eye is fixed upon the greatness of his sin; and he wonders how he can satisfy the people so easy; while another man wonders, why it takes so much to do it. And the people in their turn, wonder why he cannot see that a *scrimped confession* must beget a *scrimped fellowship!*

Let confessions, then, be ample. Let the stand-

ard of the Church be high, and right. Let her not suffer unconfessed sin upon her members; for in that case, they are dead, deforming branches, without fruit, or flowers, or even foliage. It is the sentence of inspiration: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercy."

Our second remark respects the adaptation of the rule for personal offences, in the 18th of Matthew, for the *correction of many public offences.*

We could scarcely persuade ourselves to pass from the consideration of public offences, without just hinting how admirably this rule operates in reclaiming those guilty of this kind of offence. Although the rule, as we have seen, is primarily applicable to cases of personal offence, yet, *here* its operation is most salutary; and its employment by an individual, in a case, where he has no peculiar personal concern, is nobly demonstrative of his piety, brotherly love, and abiding concern for the honor of God. For example, a brother, on a public occasion, becomes intoxicated, quarrelsome, and profane. The sad day past, he feels guilty, ashamed and distant. The news flies. Brother A. hears of it, and goes immediately to see him. He finds him alone and lonely; and approaches him with usual kindness and freedom. The afflicting fact is all talked over, and con-

fessed; and he leaves him with the full understanding, that he will embrace the first opportunity to confess his sin to the church and the world. A. is no sooner gone, than brother B., having heard the same painful news, calls on the same errand of mercy. And so with brother C. All three have the same errand, and the same motive; but have chanced to act, without intentional concert. The brother is overcome and won by kindness, and faithfulness; and saved. He comes before the church and congregation on the Lord's day, and gives ample satisfaction; and retires with the tender, forgiving love, and sympathy, and blessing of all.

If, now, in the true spirit of this rule, brethren were thus to act, in the large majority of cases of public offence, they would be as successful as brother A., B. and C. Wanderers would be reclaimed; the Church spared vast trouble; and the honor of pure and undefiled religion, secured. And how large the Scriptural encouragements to individual effort, in this quarter! "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know, that he that converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins!"—*James* 5.

But suppose brother A.'s visit were uusuccess-

ful; and that he despairs of success. Let him next, notify the erring brother of his wish and intention to call again, with "one or two more" brethren. And let him do it; and then if still unsuccessful, let him carry the case to the Church. Now, what could have been better, in the case, than this voluntary though thankless service, of brother A., aided by his fellow laborers; and guided by the ever-to-be-remembered 18th of Matthew!

CHAPTER VI.

Fifth Class of Offences; Insufferable.

Offences of the fifth and last class, are *insufferable* ones, or such as require *immediate exclusion* for the honor of the cause. Such are cases of notorious and complicated wickedness.

Now when we take into the account the fact, that Christians themselves are only partly sanctified; subject to the sallies of carnal passion, the seductions of the world, and the temptations of Satan: and another fact, that some, perhaps many in the church, are not Christians at all, but deceived or deceivers; and another fact, still, that

the sacred enclosure, in these degenerate days, is but feebly guarded, and the influx of the foolish with the wise, very great, we have reason to *expect* that sins of great enormity will be perpetrated by church members, even high civil offences and capital crimes. For example, perjury, forgery, grand larceny, absconding in debt, habitual licentiousness, murder, treason, and such like gross violations of moral, civil, and criminal law.

Now the *rule* given by Paul for one of these cases, namely: notorious and aggravating licentiousness, is found in 1 Cor. 5 : 13; and is the *true rule* for all of them.

"Put away from among yourselves that wicked person."

Hear the apostle, at large, on the *case* and its *treatment*. "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye have not mourned that he that hath done this deed, might be taken away from among you. For I, as present in spirit, have judged already concerning him that hath so done this deed. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such an one unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit

might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Therefore, put away from among yourselves that wicked person."

Hence the rule for such high offences, is, *exclude, without the ceremony of labor, upon the simple and certain ascertainment of the facts.*

The decision and the action, in all such cases, must be, as in case of a gangrene member which threatens the life of the body. Hasten amputation! For, be it remembered, the *honor of the cause*, bleeding at every pore in such case, is the great consideration. And this will demand prompt exclusion, as certainly in the world's estimation, as that of the Church. All, with one voice, pronounce the offence *insufferable;* one that is not to be tolerated, "no, not for an hour." Even strong manifestations of remorse or sorrow for the crime, must not shield from the stroke of separation. The rule is: "Put away from among you that wicked person." This was the apostle's own solemn inspired direction, in the case of the incestuous Corinthian, as we have seen. It was promptly obeyed; and the *results* were alike salutary upon the unhappy individual and the shame-stricken church.—2 *Cor.* 2.

Some may object to this view as being a course too summary, and as savoring of a spirit too uncompromising and too unforgiving, to accord to the

genius of the gospel; and especially in case of *real penitence.* They may think that a transgression, however atrocious, if there be penitence in the case, should be forgiven; and the member *retained in the church.*

But it should always be remembered that there are two interests to be regarded, in every case of discipline, namely: the *honor* of God among men, and the *good* of the offender. On the one hand, those Scriptures which speak of telling offenders their faults in order to "gain" them; of "exhorting" them to obedience; of "admonishing" them; of "restoring" them; and of "delivering them to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus," clearly show, that *their good* is to be one great consideration in their treatment. On the other hand, those passages which speak of the "name of God being profaned among the heathen," by his people; of his "name being blasphemed among the Gentiles through them;" of the necessity of "having a good report of them without;" and of "letting our light so shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven," all show, with equal clearness, that regard in all our conduct, in the Church and elsewhere, is to be had to the *honor* of God, among those without the Christian community.

Now, in *one* given case, both these interests may be duly regarded and perfectly secured by the discipline, penitence, forgiveness, and *retention in the church*, of an offender. A large majority of public offences are of this class.

In a *second case*, both these interests may be secured by exclusion, far as they can be secured at all. Exclusion may alike clear the Church, honor God, and inflict a merited and salutary punishment upon an offender. The case of the ill-famed Corinthian was of this class.

In a *third* case, in which the offence is very great, abhorrent in its nature, and aggravating in its circumstances; is generally known and deeply felt; and in which the *penitence is real* to all appearance, but of course, lacking in that practical evidence of its genuineness, which lies in the "forsaking" and the "fruit;" which full repentance includes; which time only can give, and which all the community seem to demand in order to satisfaction, exclusion, it appears to us, must take place for the *honor* of God, as well as the *good* of the offender. And, be it remembered, the painful act, if penitence is not genuine, is just and called for in the case; and if it be genuine, will not injure the offender. He will feel that exclusion in his case, is not vindictive, but perfectly consistent with a spirit of benevolence and

forgiveness, as well as justice. And, so far from being injured by it, even in feeling, will invite it for the cause's sake. And, in his case, will be seen the truth of the Scripture: "Godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation." His sorrow will work out the practical demonstration of its genuineness—will work reformation, and ultimate restoration. And thus the awful extremity of exclusion, become the actual security of the two great interests in question: the *honor* of God among men, and the *good* of a fallen brother. A case of habitual licentiousness would be of this class.

In a *fourth* case, in which the offence is of an high order: perjury, forgery, grand larceny, murder, or treason, and so consigning the offender to the State Prison or the gallows; and in which there is every possible demonstration of *genuine penitence*, that tears, and confessions, and reparation can furnish, exclusion, of course, must take place at once, upon the ascertainment of the fact.

And, hence, the position that every offender, in case of *real penitence* for his sin, *should be retained in the Church*, as well as forgiven, is as impracticable, in point of fact, as it is inconsistent with the universal sense of right.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

1. In the light of the subject of these pages, and as lying at the foundation of it, we have seen that *the best men in the church* MAY *err; and that the worst men* WILL *err.*

Every thing in this world is stamped with imperfection. Here there is no perfect honor nor happiness; no perfect relations nor friends; no perfect Christians nor Churches. Sin with unhallowed footstep, advances along; and intrudes itself into every dear association on earth; separating very friends; breaking up the peace of home; and oft sundering, by its withering touch the hearts of Christians, though "linked together in many bonds." But, if there were any bounds to its progress, these, we should suppose, would be the confines of the church; if any barrier to its advance, the threshhold of God's temple; if any *place* of its eternal exclusion, the *family* of Christ. But, even here, "offences must needs come."

2. *Each kind of offence should be learned and remembered, in its distinctive feature and rule of treatment.*

We have reduced all offences to five classes.

1. *Minor;* the smaller offences; such as should be borne. The distinctive feature of this class is, they are *infirmities, natural or acquired.* The *rule:* "We, then, that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves."

2. *Private,* or such as cannot be proved. The distinctive feature of this class, is, a *lack of evidence.* The *rule:* "Go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone;" or, "Debate thy cause with thy neighbor himself, and discover not a secret to another."

3. *Personal,* as when one brother injures another in his person, reputation, or property, and there is proof of the fact. The distinctive feature of this class, is, *personal injury and proof of it.*

The *rule:* "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."

4. *Public,* or such as equally injure all the

members of the church, and for which all require an equal satisfaction. The distinctive feature of this class, is, *equal injury of all, and equal satisfaction to all, the members.* The general *rule:* "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear."

5. *Insufferable.* The distinctive feature of this class is, *such enormity of offence as requires prompt exclusion for the honor of the cause.* The *rule*, "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person."

Now this classification of offences, with the *distinctive feature* of each class; and the *rule of treatment* in each case, should be as familiar to every church member, as the multiplication table is, to every active arithmetician. To be able to class ever-occurring offences; and to select the rule of treatment, is a great and noble attainment. A good disciplinarian is a good physician. He can heal the difficulty. And why may not all become such?

Discipline is far less difficult of understanding, than we, at first, might suppose. The Saviour's provision for the correction of offences, has a most instructive simplicity. He knew that "offences must needs come;" and offences, too, of various type; and that they must be corrected. And yet, all that he himself has said, and all that his

inspired servants have said, is embraced in a few, brief, simple sentences. The direction has meaning enough, for the tallest intellect; and plainness sufficient, for the weakest understanding. The *essence* of all divine principles and rules of discipline, is this. Now, your brother has done wrong. You must not suffer the sin to pass uncorrected. It would injure your brother, and hurt the cause. You must pity him and go and see him, and show him his fault. And if you do not succeed in helping him to see, and realize, and retrace his wrongs; then you must get one or two to go with you to see him; and to use their influence with him; and if still unsuccessful, you must bring his case to the Church. And if all your kindness and care and effort to save him prove unavailing; then you must, still kindly, but solemnly, and formally, and promptly, exclude him from the Church.

This, we repeat, is the *essence* of all divine principles and rules of Discipline. How plain! How easy of understanding! Why, then, are individuals and Churches so often whelmed in deepest difficulty, in correcting the wrongs of an offender? We answer; plainly, because simple, as are the principles of discipline; easy, as is the classification of offences; and plain, as are the methods of treatment, few have so *accurate*

knowledge of these things, as to know what to do, in any given case. We fully believe that, in nine cases out of ten, for the want of such knowledge, the injured brother or Church has settled upon some improper course of procedure. And "Behold, how great matter a little fire kindleth!" Zion's sorest troubles have arisen, from the wrong *treatment* of offences, rather than from the offences themselves, simply considered. Let, then, all thoroughly acquaint themselves with this subject. Let each kind of offence be learned and remembered, in its distinctive feature, and rule of treatment. And we add, with emphasis, let it be done at the *right time*, when no case is on hand to bias the judgment, if possible. Discipline is generally studied, when we want the knowledge of it, rather than when we may want it.

3. *The importance of the strictest practical adherence to the laws of discipline, and the spirit of those laws, can scarcely be estimated.*

It is not enough, that these laws be understood; they must be employed in every required case, and that in their true healing spirit. The high and professed object of discipline, is the purity of the Church. In the language of Solomon, that "iniquity may be purged." But mark the grand specific: "mercy and truth." "By mercy and truth, iniquity is purged." This is the celestial

combination—these the two simple but sovereign ingredients, in the Divine prescription. And whosoever the subject may be, whether a wise man or a fool, learned or ignorant, rich or poor, the prescription is the same. The provision knows no lurking favoritisms, no invidious partialities. It is "truth and mercy," for each and for all. "Truth" secures the certain application of the law; "mercy," its kind and right application. The one consults the honor of God; the other, the good of the offender. Truth, without mercy, would lead to an unfeeling and crushing severity; mercy, without truth, to a criminal and ruinous laxness. They must both operate, but not apart; they must both be employed, but always together. And the richest results will flow to the Church and to the world. Purity, peace, prosperity, and heavenly honor, will bless and adorn beloved Mount Zion, again, "the joy of the whole earth!" Her Discipline, like the skillful pruning process, will vastly improve the fairness and the flavor of her fruit as well as her general beauty, by the removal of what is straggling and redundant; and by the rearing up of those branches, which, by their position and erectness, constitute the entire growth, extremely fine in its proportions, and attractive in its aspects. She will be seen by all, to be no place for the concealment of crime; but

like a fountain, with its repulsive power. In unbelieving eyes, she will "look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

But results so rich and splendid, cannot exist, without the strictest adherence to the disciplinary laws of Christ's house; and the heavenly healing spirit of those laws.

Some Churches are so lax in Discipline, so indulgent with delinquent members, and even flagrant transgressors, because of property, or standing, or connexious, as to become a *very dunghill* in society, instead of being "the salt of the earth and the light of the world!" And, unless a redeeming spirit is soon enkindled, and burns with consuming strength, and visits with purifying influence, "Ichabod, the glory is departed," will be engraven, as with a pen of steel, upon the otherwise fair heritage of God! It is a day, of most alarming *irresponsibility* among the members of our churches! A day when the mass of professedly Christian men do too well nigh what is right in their own eyes!

Now, Discipline is Zion's salvation. It is the Lord Jehovah's appointed instrumentality, for the correction of offences, and she must wield it. We have said it was the application of right principles, in a right spirit, to the wrong conduct of

offenders. We ask, then, in conclusion: Are there not offenders among *you?* Shall the application be made, then, in *your* church, among *your* members, in every required case? Beloved brethren, it must be made! The good of every delinquent, calls for it! The health of the Church, requires it! The honor of God, demands it! Preparation to meet the returning Master, urges it now! It must be done!

"Brethren, consider what we say, and the Lord give you understanding and *faithfulness* in all things."

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